

THE
CHRISTIANS
Daily Sacrifice,
Duly Offer'd.

OR
A Practical Discourse
Teaching the Right Perfor-
mance of Prayer.

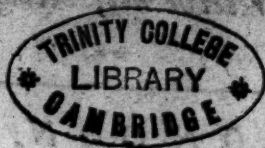
By LANCELOT ADDISON, D.D.
Dean of Litchfield.

S. James IV. 3;
*Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask
amiss.*

L O N D O N;
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at the West end of S. Pauls. 1698.

THE
CHRISTIAN
Daily Sacrifice

Daily Offering



C

To the Honourable
Sir BENJAMIN BATHURST,

SIR,

IN setting so Eminent a Name before
so mean a Work, shews that I have as
little skill in Dedication, as they have
in Architecture, who erect a Stately En-
trance to a House of no Competent Reception.
To which Indecorum I was carried by a
Zeal I have ever had to owe to the World
the Honour and Advantage that for many,
many Tears I have receiv'd from Your steady
Friendship. Which was begun in a Foreign
Nation, where You added no small Credit
and Reputation to Your Own.

I therefore Address You, (SIR) as a
Friend, the Noblest Title upon Earth, and
come not meerly to crave Your Patronage,
but to pay You a Debt. A Debt of Grati-
tude, which as it will alway be Due, so it
shall alway be Paid.

But

But I know Time, and Business, is precious to You, and therefore I will not farther trespass upon either, than to beg Your Pious Acceptance of this Small Treatise, and that You would look upon it as a Pledge of my Grateful Sense of Your Favours, and of the great Zeal I have for Your Eternal Welfare.

And now, SIR, being no Friend to the Common matter of Letters Dedicatory, pardon me that instead of enlarging upon Your Merits I apply my self to Prayer (the Subject of the ensuing Discourse) That You, and Your Lady, and Children, may long, long Enjoy Health and Prosperity; and that the God of Blessings may Bless You with all Divine Graces on Earth, and in Heaven Crown You with Glory.

Lichfield,
July 3. 1693.

Your most Obliged, and

Humble Servant

L. Addison

INTRODUCTION.

TWO very different Opinions, and both sufficiently erroneous, concerning the Holy Exercise of Prayer, got very early footing among the Judaizing Christians, (to whom St. James, the pious Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote his circular Epistle.) Some there were among them in whose esteem Prayer was sunk so low, that they thought it either wholly unnecessary, or at most but a thing of Choice and not Duty, and of that Indifference that they might use or let it alone as they pleas'd, without any Offence to God, or hindrance to themselves. And of this Opinion were those who coveted and had not, who kill'd, and desired to have, and could not obtain; Who Fought and Warr'd, yet they had not, because they asked not. S. James 4. 2.

All their Coveting, Envyng, Contending and Fighting, brought them in no

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Introduction.

advantage, because they neglected Prayer, the only means of rendring their honest Endeavours Prosperous and Successful.

And as these were apt to neglect and set too small an Esteem upon Prayer, so there were others who had a notion of Prayer as much bending to the other Extreme. For they laid so much stress upon it, and thought it so efficacious, as to expect that every thing must of course be granted them, if they sought for it in Prayer. The former made Prayer in a manner useless as to the obtaining of any thing; the latter thought it able to obtain all things. Being of opinion that the meer Exercise thereof had such a power with God, as to prevail with him even for such things as they design'd to consume upon their Lusts, and to support their Envy, Malice, Covetousness and Ambition.

How far the Present Age (guilty of all sorts of vile Opinions and Practices) is gone in this distemper, I leave every one to make his own observations; my purpose being to return at least an Honest, if not a Satisfactory answer to the Request made to me, namely, To give a familiar account of

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of the Holy Duty of Prayer. *So that without further Preface I shall begin with the true Notion thereof, as that which will more easily lead to the knowledge of its Nature and Importance.*

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CHAP.

Introduction.

In the Holy Day of Prayer, to the
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CHAP. I.

Of the true Notion of Prayer.

NOT to spend time about the Grammatical meaning of the Words by which *Prayer* in all *Languages* is signified, I shall briefly set down what *Prayer* is, and what it does imply.

Now *Prayer*, according to *S. Austin* (in *Psal. 85.*) is, *A speaking to God; When you read the Scripture, saith the Father, God speaks to you, but when you Pray, you speak to him.* From which words *Drexelius* took occasion to define *Prayer, The Conversation and Discourse of the soul with God.* Which is agreeable to the Notion of this Duty in *Job 15. 4.* for (as *Drusius* observes) the *Hebrew* Word there used for *Prayer*, signifies to have a *Familiar Converse* with the Almighty. And the *Greek* Fathers speak of it in the same sense, when they call it *ὁμιλία πρὸς Θεόν*, a *familiar talking with*, or,

unto God. For in it you unbosom your self, and open your heart and mind unto him, as a man would do unto his *Friend* in whom he most confides.

Some of the Antients, speaking *Rhetorically* of *Prayer*, call it a *Chain of gold* hanging down from heaven to draw men up thither, and to bring them into the more immediate presence of God, and to an intimate access to the *Fountain of all Goodness*. And it is suppos'd to make such a Change in us, as if it plac'd us on *Mount Tabor*, to enjoy a kind of *Transfiguration of the Soul*; which by the means of *Prayer*, as in a *Glass*, beholds the glory of the Lord, and is changed into the same Image from glory to glory.

The eye of the Soul by the help of *Prayer* (as truly as the eye of the Body feeds it self with the beauty of the fields) does refresh and recreate it self with the *Excellencies* of God, and the *Perfections* of the Holy *Jesus*. From whom it receives whatever it can desire, and through whom it avoids whatever it has cause to fear. *In Prayer*
(faith

(saith *Albertus Magnus*) the soul is carried to the source and spring of all help and comfort, bounty and goodness. It brings a man (saith he) to know God, and knowing to love him; and loving, to seek him; and in seeking to take pains; and in taking pains, to find him.

But these and the like sayings of the Antients, concerning *Prayer*, serve rather to express the Worth and the Effects of it, than to declare its Nature any farther than that from such like expressions we may reasonably infer that, *Prayer implies a great deal more than* telling over a few *Beads* (as is the way of some) or, the bare reciting so many words or sentences form'd and compos'd into that which we call a *Prayer* (which is to be fear'd is the case of many.) A man may say a thousand of these, and that too with great outward seriousness and composure, and yet be far from that which is truly and properly to be called *Praying*. For nothing deservedly bears that name wherein there is not an elevation of the soul, and a lifting up of the heart to God, as to the Original

of our *being* ; with a fervent desire to be made like unto him. So that you cannot be truly said to *pray*, unless the Soul so far gets loose from the entanglements of the world and the body, as not only to look up to the place from whence it came, but to make some sort of approaches towards it, and to him who dwelleth there, and who is the Author of its *being*, and the proper Object of its *love*. There must be an earnest endeavour to be united to God, to become one with him, to partake of his Divine nature, or at least to bear as much of his image and likeness, with respect to holiness and purity, as we can. In the Act of *Praying* (if we do it as we ought) we make an oblation of our souls and bodies to the *Eternal Being*, and declare our dependence upon his infinite Goodness, and an entire subjection to his *Infinite Power*. We so place our selves to advantage before the throne of his *Divine Majesty*, as to have the dimness of our Understandings enlighten'd by the brightness of *heavenly light*, and our minds (cold and dead

as

as they are) made warm and enliven'd by the beams of the *Everlasting Sun*. Our actions in the mean time are hereby to be so influenc'd as for the future to be conform'd to the excellent model and pattern set us by *Christ* himself, so as to become fit objects of Divine Love and Compassion. It is to him, to the *Holy Jesus*, and to the treading in his foot-steps, we are so closely to apply our selves, as that it may beget in us a strong desire to be joyn'd unto him, and to be one with him, not enduring the thoughts of ever being separated from him. This is what either *Prayer* should produce in every pious soul, or what we ought to wish it might, and which it will, when it is in its due perfection, and when we have been sufficiently exercis'd in its practice.

It's true, such flights and raptures, such fervours and transports, (as some may be suppos'd to have in their Devotion) such a near intercourse with God, as *prayer* in its perfection implies, ought not to be look'd upon as the only sign of praying as we ought, or
praying

praying to any purpose. The want of this indeed is to be imputed to the weight of those Corruptions wherewith the soul is clogg'd and press'd down, and kept from being elevated to the contemplation of the transcendent *beauty* and adorable *excellencies* of the Divine Nature. But then a great deal of this (so long as we continue cloth'd with Flesh) is what we cannot help. And seeing *wandering of thoughts, coolness of affection, want of attention*, and sometimes no small defects in *outward behaviour* (arguing too much inward sloth and negligence) may in a great measure be owing to *Infirmity*, or *Inadvertency*, God will no doubt accept of our *sincere endeavour* and *desire* that the soul should keep upon the wing, and do its part in all respects whilst we are upon our knees, our hands lift up to heaven, and our mouths uttering our Petitions in the most decent Expressions we can think of, and with profound humility and resignation to the will of God to grant what he thinks fit: shewing all the dependence
upon

upon his goodness and favour that we are able to express. If there be thus much observ'd by us toward *praying as we ought*, we need not despair of being heard for want of more, that is, for want of *praying* like a Saint, or feeling in our selves the Holy Ardours which are peculiar to some men. But still a sincere *desire* and *endeavour* to come up to the height and perfection of this Heavenly exercise, is no more than what is *of* the very essence of *Prayer*, and without which we cannot promise to our selves any great benefit from our performance of it.

And thus much being said in general of the nature of *Prayer* (whereof more may be met with in the sequel of this Discourse) it may not be amiss to enforce the Duty by acquainting you with the necessity of *Prayer*; and to shew that it is what God has at all times expected, and which has accordingly been paid him in all Ages of the World, and the consequence has shewn God's approbation thereof.

CHAP. II.

Of the Necessity of Prayer in General.

IN matters of Religion things become necessary to be done, either as they are enjoyn'd by God in the way of *Service* due to him; or, as a *means* of bringing some considerable advantage to his Creatures. Now, *Prayer* is necessary in both respects. And first as a *Duty* in the way of *Service* to be paid to God, which needs no other proof but this, *That it is an eminent part of his Worship*. Now *Worship* is that by which in an especial manner we acknowledge the *God-head*, and therefore is to be look'd upon as that which is indispensibly requir'd at our hands.

In the Sacred History of the Antediluvian World we read, *That men began to call upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 26. which words (tho' they will bear another interpretation) do
according

according to the most natural construction of them, demonstrate, *That Prayer is an Act of homage which from the beginning was paid unto the Almighty.* 'Tis true we find no *positive Law* for doing this: there was not then (as there is now) any command enjoining or requiring men to *Pray*. Nor indeed was there need of any. For the *Common light* of Nature sufficiently directed all men to this performance. And as we find no *Nation* was ever so barbarous as to deny the existence of a God, so none was ever heard of who did not own themselves obliged to *Pray* to that which they acknowledg'd for their God.

In the first age of the World, Religion was mightily suppress'd by wicked men, till the time of *Enosh*, but then God was pleas'd to move the hearts of the *good* and *pious* to restore Religion, and to call upon his *Name*. And afterwards when the *Heathen World* fell into wild and extravagant opinions about the God-head, ascribing it to such things as were wholly destitute

stitute of the excellencies, which were suppos'd to go along with it, (betraying therein a great infatuation and stupidity;) yet they still invoc'd whatsoever they call'd their *Deity*. And tho' nothing could be more senseless and absurd than to fancy that to be a *God* which they could *make* and *destroy* at their pleasure; tho' it was a deep degree of *infatuation* to pray to a *Snake* or *Crocodile* for *protection* (which were ready every hour to devour them:) and tho' it was a most sottish, unmanly conceit to beg health of a *Fever*, and to seek for recovery at the *Altar* of the *Plague* (which things sound so odd that one would not imagine such *Deities* could ever have been thought of) and tho' (I say) nothing could be more unreasonable and unmanly than to worship such inferior Beings, nor more contradictory to the Nature of God, yet amidst these absurdities (apparent in the Idolatry of the Gentiles) and erroneous *choice* of their God, they were still truly Orthodox in concluding it was their duty
to

ere to worship whatever they esteem'd to
 be so. They were perswaded there
 was in *that* to which they ascrib'd Di-
 vinity all the Attributes that render'd
 it fit for their *Adoration*: namely, such
 as Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and All-
 sufficiency. For they must needs think
 it unreasonable to seek to that for
 help, which could not be suppos'd was
 able to give it. And this they knew
 must be the case of every thing that
 was destitute of *Power, Wisdom, &c.*
 And tho' the gods of the Heathens were
 of this sort, yet whilst they believed
 them to be Gods, they believ'd also
 that they were bound to worship them.
 Of which Worship Prayer or Invo-
 cation was ever thought so eminent a
 branch, that it was wont to be put
 for the whole system of *Divine Adora-
 tion.*

But if the *Common light* of Na-
 ture should not clearly enough disco-
 ver, That Prayer is a chief and Prin-
 cipal part of that worship and homage,
 which is indispensibly due to the All-
 wise Creator of the World, yet the
Scriptures

Scriptures make it undoubtably evident. And the many Texts wherein God promises to hear your Prayers plainly imply a Command to make them. *Call upon me*, saith the Lord, *and I will answer thee.* Jer. 33. 3. *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be deliver'd,* Joel 3. 32. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, saith our Saviour, he shall give it you: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* S. John 16. 23, 24. *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be open'd unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.* S. Marth. 7. 7, 8, 9. In all which and the like passages of Holy Writ, there is imply'd both a command to pray, and promise to be heard. Psal. 65. 2. *Thou that hearest the prayer unto thee* (saith the Psalmist) *shall all flesh come:* meaning. "That every man ought to betake himself to God's service, and that none who has any care of Piety or sense of Religion, will be negligent and remiss

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“in imploring the divine goodness, and
“making his requests known unto
“God.

If you seriously consider God's dealings with men, you will see that they are made up of abundant Mercy, Compassion, and Bounty. All which you devoutly acknowledge and praise, when you rightly address him with your Prayers. And by if a steady obedience you keep fast to his Law, patiently waiting his good time and pleasure; persevering in sincere applications to him, relying solely upon him without resorting to any other, or using any Indirect means for your support; he then will seasonably grant your petitions, succour you in your greatest necessities, and deliver you in the most imminent dangers. *Psal. 145. 17, 18, 19.*

For the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him faithfully. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he will hear their cry, and will save them. He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Holiness and Veracity are his two great inseparable Attributes. His Holiness is visible in all his actions and works of Providence : in which he is so far from being the least occasion of men's sinning, that he does all that can be done to rational and free Agents to keep them from it. He enlightens their minds, and sanctifies their hearts, intending by this means either to preserve their innocence, or, as far as possible, to restore it, after they have lost it. But if you, or any one, be so unhappy as not to be wrought upon by this method, then he lets such know that he means to punish them according to their works.

And next as to God's Veracity, this is apparent in all his words ; for he never affirms what is not most true, nor promises what he does not fully intend to perform. And therefore seeing he has said, "*Call upon me, and I will answer thee, and, Ask, and ye shall receive.*" Since he is *nigh to all that call upon him* ; that is, willing and ready to grant their requests, he will not fail

fail of his word. And tho you find your self wavering, light and unconstant, and apt to be turn'd with every blast, diverted by every allurements, and to deal with your best and chiefest vows, as *Sampson* with his new cords which he broke at the naming of a *Philistin*; yet with God there is no unfaithfulness, *He is the Lord, and changeth not; he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*: whatsoever then he has said shall certainly come to pass. For *he is righteous in all his ways*, and never fails of making good his Title of being the Hearer of Prayers. When *Rebecca* was childless, *Isaac* entreated the Lord for her, and she conceiv'd. *Moses* besought the Lord to remove the Plague he had brought upon *Egypt*, and his Prayer was granted. *Hannah* labouring under the reproach of barrenness, pour'd out her soul unto God, and he gave her a son. *Ezra* and his Country-men, pray'd that God would safely guard them home out of their *Babylonian* bondage, and he was intreated by them, and his hand was

upon them for good. When the *Israelites* in the first battle with the *Philistins* were defeated, their Judges slain, and the Ark of God taken Prisoner; yet *Samuel* cry'd to the Lord to give them better success, the Lord heard him, and fought from heaven in their behalf; discomfiting the enemy with thunder and lightning. And when ever the *Jews* were in affliction, they no sooner made their unfeign'd supplications unto God, but he sent them relief, he deliver'd them from their oppressors; and by his all-wise and gracious *Providence* directed them to some auspicious, successful means of redressing their grievances, and either restored them to their former condition, or gave them one that was better.

I mention these Examples of God's granting the Prayers of his Servants, with no other intent but to confirm your assurance of his never failing to fulfil his promise of hearing those who duly call upon him. And he seems so ready to do this, that he will rather

ther work miracles, than faithful prayers shall return empty : as it hapned in the case of *Joshua*, at whose request God made the Sun stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, Josh. 10. 12. And when many have been brought to the lowest ebb of misery and want, even then has God been ready at hand to hear the groanings of the Prisoners, and to loose *those who were appointed to die*, Psal. 86. signally displaying his power and providence in ordering the affairs of this lower World; hearing the prayers of the Poor in misery, being merciful to those who call daily upon him; rejoycing the souls of his Servants, and saving all such as put their trust in him. And *David* perhaps having an eye to this, concludes his *Psalter* with this affectionate Exhortation; *let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord*: And none can be thought worthy to live, or to enjoy the breath of life, who does not chearfully exercise himself in praying to, and praising the Almighty.

Which shews the Universality, as well as Necessity, of Prayer, and that it is the Duty not only of this or that sort of men, but of all. For if any should vainly pretend to be excus'd from paying this homage to God, it must be either because they are too *holy* or too *great*, either they are so *good* as not to need to pray, or so *great* that it is below them.

But no man by reason of his holiness can be free from this duty ; for those who have been most eminent for this divine quality, have been also most eminent for Devotion. And of this you have an unquestionable instance in our Saviour, who was superlatively eminent for all heavenly perfections, and immaculate both by nature and conversation. For he was both born and liv'd without sin. And yet it is recorded of this most heavenly, divine person, That in the days of his flesh, whilst he was yet in the world, in the course of his obedience and humiliation, and not arriv'd to the glorious and spiritual state of the celestial life, Heb. 5. 7. *He did offer*

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offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he fear'd, or as it is in the Greek, ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας for his piety. Here the Eternal Son, becoming Man, made his submissive Petition to his Eternal Father, either to free him from that direful passage to death, or to strengthen and bear him up in the horrible terrors, conflicts and agonies, that therein he met with; and that being dead, he would restore him to life, and not to let him continue in the grave, but to raise him thence, and send back his spirit into his body. And God heard and granted his desire. For the third day after his burial, Christ rose from the dead, and God gave him back that spirit which on the Cross he so affectionately recommended into his hands, *Luke 23.46.*

And as by this plain example of Christ's praying, you may clearly see that no mans sanctity can excuse him from doing the like, so in the next place no man is freed from praying

upon the score of his grandeur or secular Greatness. This was evident in *David*, who at the same time he wore the *Royal Diadem*, did not neglect the *hallowed Censor*, but constantly offer'd unto God the Incense of Prayer. And for his diligence and assiduity in this sacred office, he gain'd, as some think, the glorious character of being a *Man after God's own heart*, 1 *Sam.* 13. 14. And indeed all good men have ever thought it their duty, and made it their practice, to worship God by Prayer. And even bad men too have been of the same judgment. For they likewise have own'd it to be their obligation thus to serve God. And whenever they perform'd Prayer as a Duty to him, without doubt they were accepted of him. *Saul* pray'd for a decision by lots, and God granted his request, but it had like to have cost him the life of his *Son*, and the revolt of his *Subjects*, 1 *Sam.* 14. 41, 42. Which shows That God do's sometimes hear the prayers of the wicked, but then it is in *justice*, and not in *mercy*, as will appear in due place.

And

And now seeing Prayer is a special and principal part of God's worship, you must own it to be indispensibly requir'd of you, so long as you think it your duty to worship God. He commands, and you must discharge it: your obedience herein is above all things most acceptable to God, and will be best rewarded by him.

CHAP. III.

The necessity of Prayer, as it is made to be the means of obtaining what we want, and of conveying a blessing on what we enjoy.

WAnt is commonly said to be the Mother of Prayer, so that if you want nothing, you need use prayer no otherwise than as it is an expression of your *Duty*, and a discharge of the *worship* you owe to God. But if you stand in need of any thing, you can never solidly hope to receive it, but by the
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the mediation of Prayer ; For God has appointed it as the proper means to obtain his blessings. And all those Texts which require Prayer as a *Duty* and *homage* belonging to God, do at the same time propound it as a *means* to gain his favour in the relief of your wants, and blessing what you have.

But here I expect to find you objecting, That tho' Prayer be undeniably a part of religious Worship which none ought to neglect, yet you think it needless to the obtaining a supply of your necessities; because God needs not your prayers to inform him of your wants, nor to move him to relieve them.

'Tis true, God needs not your prayers to inform him of your wants ; For according to our Saviour, *Matth. 6. 8. He knows what things you have need of before you ask him* : which words shew, that Prayer is not needful in order to inform God, who by reason of his infinite knowledge, can be ignorant of nothing; but they respect those who at our Saviour's

viour's being upon Earth, were wont to lengthen out their Prayers with vain repetitions and idle Tautologies, thinking they should have their petitions the sooner granted for the sake of the multitude of words used therein : whereas Our Lord assures them, that our heavenly Father was not to be wrought upon by their long prayers, and their much speaking, and that such were altogether useless in order to inform him of mens minds and wants, as fully knowing them without being told. Christ was so far from abolishing, that he establishes the use of prayer, when he taught his Disciples how they might pray aright. To which end he gave them a most absolute comprehensive Form of Prayer : which he enjoyn'd them both to use and imitate. Which form bears his Name, and from him is call'd the *Lord's-Prayer*. Whereof I shall have occasion to mind you in another place.

As to the other branch of your Objection which makes Prayers unnecessary to move God to relieve your wants,
because

because of his being ready to do it without them, there needs no more to be said to it, but only to desire you to consider, That tho' God is naturally inclin'd to be gracious, and ready to give more than either you desire or deserve, yet he has been pleas'd to declare, That he will not give without asking. And it sufficiently demonstrates his goodness and bounty to give to them that ask, and to open to them that knock. And tho' goodness is essential to God, and that it is his nature and property to open his hand and fill his creatures, yet still he expects you should address your requests to him, if not to move his goodness to relieve your wants, yet to shew you are sensible of them: and that you believe he alone is able to give supply. Besides, in every prayer you acknowledge your dependence on God, that you are his Beads-man, live upon his alms, and expect to receive nothing at his hands, but what you seek for by humble and diligent prayer.

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But then again, suppose Want, (as hath been already observ'd) is the Mother of Prayer, and prayer the means to have our wants supply'd ; suppose at the same time you had no want to be supply'd, and that you could truly say, *I am rich and increas'd with goods and have need of nothing*, Rev. 3. 17. suppose you were able to stretch your fancy as far as to imagine an All-sufficiency in your self, and that you were set above the reach of indigence ; yet still you have need to pray, that God would sanctify the things you possess. *For every creature of God is sanctified by the word and prayer*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. These two are requir'd to make all the creatures lawful for your use, and to render you happy in their enjoyment. For first, the *Word* permits you a freedom in the use of all the Creatures : God therein having remov'd the distinction, and taken down the old partition-wall which stood between clean and unclean beasts, and repeal'd the Law concerning forbidden meats. To the repeal of which Law Christ had an eye,

eye, when he said, *That which goes into the man (that which is eaten and drunk) is not that which defiles a man.* And in S. Peter's Vision, Christians are taught to call nothing Common or unclean.

And as the *Word* allows you an unrestrain'd use of all the creatures, so Prayer sanctifies them to your use, by obtaining the divine Blessing upon them. For whatsoever by the means of prayer you receive from the bountiful hand of heaven, by the same means you receive Grace rightly to imploy them, which is that I call a *blessing*.

But Prayer do's not only obtain a blessing upon your dayly food, and the things of this present life, but likewise on the things relating to the life to come. For the Divine Ordinances which are the means of salvation, will never answer their end, unless God water them from above, and make them prosperous and successful. And yet you have no reason to expect this blessing, unless you seek it by prayer from him, who alone has power to give it. You must
seek

seek this blessing I say only from God, exclusively of all others: which to make out (because the practice of some is very much to the contrary) shall be the Subject of the next Chapter.

CHAP. IV.

Prayer is to be made only unto God.

YOU are not ignorant who they are that maintain and practise the worship of Saints, and pretend to excuse it by saying, "That the worship they give the Saints is of another kind than that which they give unto God. But since the Apostle forbids us to *call upon any in whom we do not believe*, Rom. 10. 14. that is, not to pray to any who is not fit to be the object of our Faith and Trust; and God alone being fit for this, to him alone you ought to make your prayers. But if you will give that honour to another which belongs only to God, you transfer his worship to the
Crea-

Creature, which is a most aggravating Sacrilege and Injustice.

It is a general received doctrine, That no sensible or material sacrifices, such as were under the Law, are now to be offer'd unto God under the Gospel, yet all grant that the spiritual sacrifice of Praise and Thanks-giving, is still to be offer'd to him, and that to offer this to any other is a derogation from his Glory; and quite contrary to his doctrine, who said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Indeed some of the Fathers are thought to have favour'd the Worship and Invocation of Saints, because they desir'd the *Holy Men*, whose memories they celebrated, to joyn with them in their prayers: Yet the expressions used by them on such occasions may by any impartial Reader be plainly found to be rather *flights of fancy*, and *Wishes*, than *Prayers*, and favour more of *luxuriancy of Style and Harangue* than *Devotion*.

It is notorious that the Church of *Rome* requires her Members to make Vows and offer Incense to the Saints: To worship their Reliques and Images: To believe that through their help and assistance God's benefits are obtain'd; and that for the sake of their Intercession, Grace and Merit, he bestows many favours on mankind. But grant that this were true, and that by reason of the benefits you receive by the Saints, you ought to pray to them; yet before you do this, you ought to be well assur'd, that those are really and infallibly Saints, to whom you are to pray: and that they already enjoy the presence of God; both which are necessary (even according to the Romanists themselves) to warrant your Invocation of them.

Before you invoke the Saints, you are likewise to be well assur'd that they can and will hear you, that they know the Wants and State of men upon earth, and are mindful of them; and at leisure to obtain the things that are pray'd for. Now, to say the Saints know all mens

Necessities, and are ready in all places, and at all times, to supply them, is to equal them with God, and to make them as Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, &c. as himself. Which is a Conclusion the *Papists* would be loth to grant, tho' they hold Premises naturally tending to it.

But let the *Papist's* Opinions be in this case what they please, it is your happiness to be of that Communion which teaches you to direct your Prayers only to God; who you are well ascertain'd, knows all your Wants, and is willing and able to relieve them. The Scripture saith expressely, *that Christ is the only mediator with God, and that he gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. 6.

The office of Saviour and Mediator are two things which must necessarily be joyn'd together; so that he who is the one, is the other also. Now seeing there is but one Saviour, there is also but one Mediator: and that is Christ. There is but one God, and he is the Creator of all, and wills and designs the good of all; and there is but one

Peace-

Peace-maker God and Man, namely Christ, who has taken upon him our Common Nature, and in it dyed for all whose Nature he took. He laid down his Life, and pour'd out his Blood, to rescue Mankind out of an evil State, and commands all that communicate with him in humane Nature, to come unto God only through *him*. God having no where appointed any other intercessors besides him. Which consideration moved the Church, ever since it was call'd Christian, to offer up her Prayers only in the name of Christ, and to conclude them in this Form, *Through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Keep therefore to the Doctrine of the Church to which you belong, and which obliges you to pray only to God, and in her 22^d. Article censures all praying to any else, *To be a foolish thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but rather contrary thereto.*

CHAP. V.

Some uncommon Considerations to stir you up to the Holy exercise of Prayer.

THere is not any one part of Religious Worship, which is more strictly commanded by the Laws of God, or more highly recommended by the practice of Holy Men, than that of Prayer. This carries with it the greater Beauty and Lustre, and in all respects is of greatest use and benefit. And yet notwithstanding all this, there are not many things wherein (perhaps) you may find your self more indifferent, cool and unactive, than in Prayer. And therefore the better to quicken you up to this Sacred Office, I here present you with some less obvious Considerations to that purpose.

And (1.) Consider that by your diligence in Prayer and constant calling upon God, you become his Remembrancer, and suffer him not to be unmind-

unmindful of you. And indeed he can no more be forgetful of such as importune him with their Prayers, than a Mother can forget her sucking Child. But if a Mother should be so unnatural as to stop her ears to the Infants cry, yet God will hearken unto the cry of his Children, and give them, if not what they particularly desire, yet what he knows to be most for their good. It is not safe for you to conclude of his kindness towards you, by his not speedily granting your Requests. For they that are dearest to him, may oftentimes with great difficulty work out those blessings, which fall into the Mouths of the Careless. "And the
"Wise disposer of all things, knows it
"fit to hold his best Servants short
"of those Favours which they sue for:
"but then it is for the tryal of their
"Faith, or the exercise of their Pati-
"ence, or the encrease of their Impor-
"tunity, or the doubling of their Obli-
"gation. And when he withholds his Benefits for a while from his humblest Suppliants, yet he does not forget them.

However, if he were capable of forgetting any one, as he is not (and especially of those that pray unto him) yet frequent application is of the like nature with the importunity we use to one another, when we want to be reminded and have our Memory refresh'd. It is holding such a continual converse with God, as humbly to let him know, as *Jacob* did the Angel with whom he strove, that we will not suffer him to leave till he is graciously pleas'd to bless us.

(2.) All pious Christians, according to *S. Paul*, have their conversation in Heaven: *Phil. 3. 20. Matth. 6. 20, 21.* it is their Property and Glory to live here below as if they were above: they bend all their Thoughts and Desires principally to Heaven, and tho' their Bodies are on Earth, yet their Affections are where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Now, there is no readier way for you to have your Conversation in Heaven, than by continually sending up your Soul thither in fervent Prayer. For by this you pierce the Clouds, and
have

have access to the throne of Divine Mercy, and hold correspondence with the Almighty Maker and Governor of the Universe. When your Soul is not press'd down with earthly, heavy Affections, but by a pure and holy Life becomes light and Ethereal, then it nimbly mounts up to the things on high, and may be said to soar above the low, creeping Concerns of this impure World, and to have its Conversation in Heaven. And by the force of pious Desires it ascends to the blessed Mansions above, whence you look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And if this be fully consider'd, 'twill be enough to endear Devotion to your choice, and to oblige your care of so Seraphic a performance.

In the Third place, Consider that at the last general Judgment your Prayers shall come up for a memorial before God, and be both acknowledged and rewarded by him. Then will the Judge of the whole Earth own all devout Souls for his, and in the most literal sense make good what ought, as far

as in us lies, to be daily verified in this World, *That he is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all those that are round about him.*

In the Sacred History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, you read of Cornelius a Proselyte of the Jews; one who worshipped the true God, tho' uncircumcis'd, *That he gave much alms to the poor, and pray'd to God alway: Acts 10.* He was charitable and bountiful to the indigent, and a constant observer of the set times of Prayer. And his Alms and Prayers were so pleasing to God, that they brought down no ordinary blessing upon him: for of a Jewish Proselyte God made him a Christian Convert. By which single instance you may discern the particular regard Heaven has for those who conscientiously observe flatted Times of Prayer, and joyn Works of Charity with Devotion. That such are blessed of the Lord, and shall not fail of reaping the Fruit thereof in due season, if they faint not.

Consider

Consider in the last place the singular satisfaction which from Prayer accrues to the best and worthiest Powers of your Soul. All thinking men observe, That the *Understanding* and *Will* (which are your principal Faculties) meet with a sensible Pleasure and Content, when they are employ'd about the noblest of their proper Objects. Now, Truth is the most proper object of the Understanding, and God is the noblest Truth, and seeing that in Prayer the *Mind* is employ'd in the Contemplation of him, it cannot miss of Delight and Pleasure, nor fares it otherwise with the Will, the proper Object whereof is what we call Good (either real or in appearance,) Now in Prayer the Will is suppos'd to be fixt upon God who is Goodness it self; (all those Excellencies which are scatter'd among the Creatures and denominate them to be good, and all which put together are but few and small in comparison of the supreme Good) do all concentre in a superlative degree in him to whom we pray; so that the mind must needs receive a sensible

sible delight, as being thereby conversant about the most excellent of the things that properly belong to them. But besides all this, there is a great satisfaction accrewing to the Soul through the means of Prayer, by reason of that pious Familiarity which therein it enjoys with God. Can there be a greater satisfaction to your Rational part, than to have the liberty of unloading all your Perplexities and Fears, Scruples and Doubts, into the bosom of the Almighty? Is it possible that any thing should bring more ease to a pained Mind, than freely to make known unto the Lord, not only your Frailties, but even your worst wilful Sins, and that too with assurance of their Remission, if they are truly repented of and entirely forsaken? That God, the only Maker, Preserver, and Universal Monarch of the World, should admit sinful Dust and Ashes to approach him, and in Prayer to converse with him, is not only the highest Satisfaction and Contentment, but the greatest Dignity and Vouchsafement whereof a Mortal can be capable.

When

When Gods Wrath was so incens'd against *Israel*, that he resolv'd to consume them, he could not do it whilst *Moses* Pray'd for them, and therefore he bad him give over his Praying, and to let him alone, that he might execute the Displeasure he had against that stiffnecked People, which by *Moses's* intercession was restrain'd. And though *Moses* grants that there were great Reasons and Causes for God to destroy them, yet he shews also that there were greater for God to spare them. By their Sins they deserv'd Destruction, but yet God's Glory was concern'd in their Preservation, lest otherwise the *Egyptians* should say; "*For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the Mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth, Exod. 32. 12. 14.*" And *Moses's* intercession for *Israel* was so prevailing, that God repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto his People. Not that there could be in God a proper Repentance, as it signifies a sorrow for a Fault committed, and an alteration of his Mind toward the same

Subject :

subject: but by this word (*repenting*) taken from Men, is signified an alienation of God's will and liking towards a thing which of Good is become Evil. But that which is chiefly here to be remark'd, is, the force Prayer has with the Alwise Creator, in that by it *Moses* moved God to avert his Judgements, and to appease the Anger he had justly conceiv'd against his People. It was Prayer that hinder'd *Israel's* Ruin, and it is still the best Instrument to fetch down the greatest Blessings: for *it pierces the clouds* saith *Ben-Sirach*, and will not turn away till the highest regard it, *Ecclus. 35. 17.*

“ You would think your self an happy Man if you could get one certain means of helping you to whatever you wanted, tho' it cost you never so much pains and labour to get it. Prayer is this certain means, which never fails of bringing you, if not all that you think you want, yet all that you really want, or all that God sees fit for you. And considering in what continual want you are of receiving something or other

other from that bountiful hand which only is able to supply all Wants, it were an unaccountable carriage to neglect that which alone can procure it.

Nor is there any such uneasiness in the exercise of Prayer, as may dishearten you from its performance. For if there be any uneasiness therein, it arises not from the nature of the Duty, but the untowardness of your own Heart. If you would refine and purge that from all Earthly and Carnal Thoughts, and endeavour to put it into an Heavenly, Spiritual frame, and accustom it to Prayer, all uneasiness therein would wear off, and for Pain you would find a singular Delight and Pleasure. For not only your best Faculties are employ'd about the noblest of their proper Objects in Prayer (as was said) but it also brings you near to him who is the Source and Spring of all Felicity; which must needs yield a great Delight to Hearts which are not distemper'd, and like a sick Palate cannot relish the most pleasant Food. But Prayer being a Spiritual Duty, is not to be tasted by a Mind that is Carnal, and

therefore if your Affections be set either on the Delights of the Flesh, or the Dross of the World, no wonder if the divine Pleasures of Devotion are insipid, and that like *Israel*, you prefer Flesh-pots before Milk and Honey, and leave the *Quails* and *Manna*, for *Onions* and *Garlick*.

You will not, I hope, account these things unworthy of your Thoughts, nor wilfully make your self comfortless, by suffering either Employments or Pleasures to thrust them out of your Mind : But rather make use of them to season your Delights, and sweeten your Troubles, and interpose themselves betwixt you and the World ; that so your Life may be happy, and your Death welcome.

I know you have better Monitors, and carry the best about you, in your bosom. And if what I write be needless, yet it argues my Affection, and discharges the Duty of Friendship. My Prayers are better than my Counsels, and both are hearty and unfained for your good. God prosper your perusal,

usal, and make you happy in the practice of what you now receive.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us, and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to Pray, may by thy Mighty Aid be Defended and Comforted in all Dangers and Adversities, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

CHAP. VI.

Of Preparation to Prayer.

HAVING giving you an account of the Nature of Prayer, I come next to shew what is requir'd to render your Prayers acceptable, and so prevent the praying amiss: And the first thing requisite to this end is the Preparing and Fitting of your self for so excellent a Performance. That there is such Preparation expected at your hands, you may learn both from Reason and Scripture,

peare, from whence all that is Solid and truly Argumentative is to be had for the proof of any Position.

And First, Reason, or the *Light* which is Natural and Common to all Men, clearly shews you, *That matters of moment and importance ought not to be undertaken, till they be thoroughly weigh'd; and it be consider'd, how they may be best manag'd and effected.* *He that intends to build a house, or to make war, ought first to sit down and consider whether he has sufficient to carry on the work before he begins it, lest having begun and wanting abilities to finish, he be forc'd to give it over with shame and reproach,* Luke 14. 28, 29, 30, 31, &c Few things succeed well which are not first well considered. Every thing you undertake requires a Preparation suitable to the Undertaking. And in the business of Prayer you may fetch Arguments enough from within your self for an humble Preparation to discharge it. For when you seriously reflect upon your own Vileness, the dreadful Majesty of Heaven to which you are to Pray,

and

and the fearful effects of not Praying aright, you must be far gone in stupidity and senselessness, if you apprehend not the necessity of preparing your self for this Duty.

No man will solicit a favour at the hands of one of like Passion with himself, without using the due forms of Application. Would you not esteem it a piece of egregious rudeness to address an *Earthly Potentate* in a *Style* and *Mode*, which is contrary to the Custom, and not done with that Grace as is usual on such occasions. Common Sense directs you to approach those who are your *Superiours* either in *Condition*, or *Power*, or both, in such a sort as becomes their Station and yours. Reason is a Law against Indecency, as well as against grosser Immoralities. So that you need no clearer Light then that within, to shew you with what careful preparedness you are to speak unto God by Prayer, and hold an holy Converse with him, in that best of Religious Duties.

Will any man of either Modesty or Discretion venture to utter himself *extempore* concerning Matters of highest importance in a grave and learned Assembly? Will he not rather (if he may) choose to come prepared, and compose, and weigh every Word and Period, before he ventures to speak, lest he expose himself by any rude and indigested Expression; this would be but a becoming Piece of Respect at least, and the want of it be condemn'd as no small Presumption; Now in the case before us, the reason of the thing is only so much stronger than it can be put in any worldly Concerns, as there is so much more of awe due to the Person we are to speak to, and the Business we come upon is of far greater Moment than any thing that is meerly Temporal can pretend to. You that Pray are but a Worm, Dust, a Shadow, a Bubble, Nothing, nay worse, sinful, polluted and abominable: He to whom you Pray is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who is able eternally to destroy your Soul and Body in Hell. The things you may Pray for
are

are not of an inferiour, but of the greatest Moment, even the Salvation of your Soul: Grace in this Life and Glory in the next.

And when you have maturely consider'd these things, I leave you to make your own Conclusion as to the Preparation now spoken of; And whether Reason do's not convince you of its Necessity.

But if your great Oracle, Reason, were Dumb in this case, yet the Scriptures are plain and expresse to the purpose.

They teach you not to come before God without having first fitted your self for so dreadful a *Presence*. And this you may collect from God's Command to *Aaron*; which was, that neither he nor his Sons should Enter upon Divine Service, till they had wash't their hands and feet in the Laver appointed for that end, *Exod. 4*. A Ceremony that among other things, did certainly imply, that all ought Piously to compose and order themselves for the Celebration of Religious Doubts, and to put away all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, e're they did enter upon so Momentous a Solemnity.

nity. You read in *Eſay* 1. that God would not look upon *Iſrael* when they ſpread out their hands unto him, (which was an ancient manner of Praying) nor hearken when they made many Prayers, becauſe their Hands were full of Blood, and their Actions full of Injuſtice. But if they would waſh and make themſelves clean, and put away the evil of their doings, and retract their faults, then he would incline his Ear to their Supplications, and be found of them when they ſought unto him. But till this was done, all their Sacrifices, Prayers, and Oblations, were to no purpoſe.

Whilſt *Iſrael* lov'd to wander and would not refrain their feet; whilſt they continued in their Vices and would not give over their wicked Courſes, God did not only reject their own Prayers, but alſo the Prayers that others made in their behalf. For he poſitively forbade the Prophet to pray for them, *Jer.* 7. 16. and 14. 12, 11. Declaring, that he would not hear their Cry when they Faſted, nor accept them when they offer'd Burnt Offerings and Oblations.

And

And those Cruel Princes that pluck't
*the Skin of the People, and the Flesh from
 their Bones; who chopt them in pieces for
 the Pot, and as flesh for the Caldron,*
*when they cry'd unto the Lord, he would not
 hear them, because they were wicked in their
 doings: Mich. 3. 2, 3, 4. Though they cry
 in mine ears, saith the Lord, with a loud
 voice, yet I will not hear them, Ezek. 8.*
 18. *Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I
 have pity:* You have then no hope that
 God should accept your Services, whilst
 you continue Impenitent. Your Heart
 must be furnish'd with sincere Piety,
 if you expect your Prayers should be
 regarded in God's sight, or that any
 other part of Worship should be sea-
 sonable and welcom to him. Without
 Repentance all the Religious Acts you
 can possibly execute, are but Illusion
 and Hypocrisie; inward Wickedness
 hidden under the Cloak and Visard of
 outward Sanctity. Till therefore you
 give Glory to God by a free Confession
 of your Sins, and by a lively Conver-
 sion fly to his Mercy, you can neither
 feel the effects of Pardon, nor the ac-

ception of your Prayers. Whilst your Silver is Dross and your Wine mixt with Water; whilst your Life and Actions (that should be Pure) continue Corrupt and Degenerate, all you do in Religion in stead of Appeasing, will incense the Divine Displeasure.

CHAP. VII.

Preparation to Prayer practis'd by the Jews, &c.

AN D what is now spoken concerning this Preparation, is no novel or upstart Doctrine, but an ancient Orthodox Truth, Taught and Practis'd by Men of all Religions, and rejected by none but the Lewd and Miscreant.

And first, as to the Antient *Jews*, *Aristaus* reports, that it was their Custom to Wash before they Pray'd, *Hist.* 72. And the modern *Jews*, (living in the Eastern Countries) observe the same custom of Washing, as a Preparative to Prayer

Prayer and reading the *Shemaah*. And no doubt they do this in imitation of the Priests, who enter'd not upon performing any Religious Office in the Sanctuary, unless they had first Wash'd. And it was with respect to this Custom, that *David* would not come to the Altar, till he had washt his Hands in Innocency; that is, till he had prepared himself to Worship God: being well assur'd that he was not worthy to receive the Divine Protection, or any gracious Answer to the Prayers, wherein he did not joyn Purity to Devotion, and had a Heart as clean as the Hands he had washt: And that his Thoughts and Actions were as purified as his Body. And tho' it was common with the *Jews* in any solemn Business to wash their Hands in protestation of their Innocency, yet this Ceremony was especially used before they said their Prayers: Which shew'd the great esteem they had for that Duty, and that they thought it of such Holiness and Purity, as that it could not be rightly perform'd, without a Preparation an-

swerable thereunto. And this you may further collect from the several Rules prescrib'd by the *Rabbins*, to be observ'd by the *Jews*, when they come to Pray. And,

1. The Masters forbad any to enter the Temple with Shooes on their Feet. Which Prohibition they founded on those Words of God to *Moses*, *Exod. 3. 5.* Put thy shooes off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; which command was also given to *Joshua* (5. 15.) by the captain of the Lords host. God does not bid them to put off their Shooes as if the Ground whereon they stood were Holy, by an internal or perpetual Quality, but because of God's Presence, which he was pleas'd at that time, in that place, in a more especial manner to exhibit. And from this injunction given to these two Worthies, *Solomon* likely gave that General Rule, namely, that every one should take heed to his Feet when he enter'd the House of God. Which Text the *Targum* explains thus, "Thou Son of Man, take heed to thy Feet, when thou entrest into the San-

"Quary

"Quary to Pray, and go not thither
 "full of thy Sins unrepented of. And
 "be not as Fools who offer Sacrifices
 "for their Sins, and yet turn not from
 "them. Only Penitents then are fit
 to come to the House of Prayer, and to
 be Suppliants at the Throne of Grace.
 Every one is to put off his Shooes, to
 abandon his Sins when he comes unto
 God; to take heed to his Feet and ap-
 proach him with all possible Reverence.
 Under the Law no man had liberty to
 come into the Congregation, who
 had touch'd any Unclean thing, till he
 was sprinkl'd with Water by the Priest.
 And under the Gospel there is no
 coming unto God, without *having your*
heart sprinkl'd from an evil Conscience,
and your body wash't with pure water, Heb.
 10 22.

2. The Masters forbad any to enter
 the Temple with Dust on their Feet;
 meaning thereby, That all Earthly and
 Worldly Affections, Thoughts and Pas-
 sions, were to be shaken off and dis-
 charged by them, who come to offer
 Spiritual Holy Services unto God. The
Jews

Jews were also injoynd not to bring with them into the Sanctuary any of those Tools and Instruments used by them in their Civil Trades and Employments: by which they were also minded to leave behind them whatsoever might in the least suggest any Earthly Concern, Worldly Notion, or Incumbrance, whilst they were at God's House; lest they should be disturb'd or diverted in Devotion.

Nor were the *Jews* singular in this particular, or the only People that were careful thus to Prepare themselves for Prayer. For the *Mahumedans* (who took many of their Rites from the *Jews*) are very precise in Preparing themselves for the *Moschs* or *Giamma's*, the places of their Publick Worship. For they never repair to these till they have first Wash't at home; nor do they enter those Solemn Places with their Shooes on. And they are of Opinion, That if they come Unprepared to Prayers, or behave themselves Indecently at them, that they lose the benefit of their coming. *Cleanliness* according

According to *Mahumed* is the *Key of Prayer*, and that it is not regarded without it. Under the name of Cleanliness, all the Preparatives to Prayer are understood. And by Prayer is meant the whole System of Religious Worship. Now, this Cleanliness does not only respect the Body, but also regards the Mind and Conversation: and it implies the putting away of all unlawful Actions, the purging of the Heart from all vicious and unworthy Thoughts and Affections: And they hold that Filthiness in these is a thing most offensive to God; who according to their *Alcoran*, as well as our *Bible*, is of Purer Eyes than to behold the least Defilement.

And it may well be suppos'd that *Christians* will not come behind *Jews* and *Mahumedans* in this particular: Nor boldly and inconsiderately rush upon those holy Duties, which these Infidels approach with so great Preparedness. The Apostle advises all of his Religion, *to lift up holy and pure hands in Prayer*; *1 Tim. 2. 8.* By his Apostolical Authority, he appointed that not only at the Temple

Temple at *Jerusalem*, but every where else *Christians* should Pray with that Ceremony of holding up the hands, joyn'd with Purity of Conscience and Good Works : And that they should take care, that no doubts or irresolutions of Mind should hinder the exercise or benefit of Prayer. You do but burn *Incense* to *Vanity*, and lift up your hands to Heaven to no purpose, whilst you regard Iniquity in your Heart, and your Actions are unjust. God will cast back your Prayers, like dung upon your face, and reject both them and your Person, when you tread his Courts, and at the same time hate to be reform'd. *God hears not sinners, but if any man be his worshipper, him he heareth, S. John 9. 31. His eyes are over the righteous and his ears are open to their Prayers : but his face is against them that do evil ; Psal. 34. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 12. God looks kindly on his obedient servants, but he sets himself as an enemy against the obstinately wicked. He is nigh to good men and hears their Prayers, but their Prayer is an abomination unto him who turn their ears*

ears from hearing the Law. Prov. 28. 9. 15.

29. The humble dutiful Soul imploring God's assistance, is sure to receive it, in kind or in equivalence.

But the Texts of Scripture declaring the Prayers of Sinners to be ineffectual, are to be understood of none but Impenitent sinners, who stubbornly walk in the Ways of their own Hearts, and do that which is Right in their own Eyes: who either wilfully continue in their Impieties, or retain a kindness for them. It is not then your having committed Sin, and your sense of some Guilt being upon you, that ought to hinder your Praying. For you must Pray the rather that God may remit and pardon the sins you have committed. For if you are humbly minded, and sincerely chang'd from Bad to Good; if you loath and forsake your evil Ways, and with a broken and contrite Heart grieve for your Offences, you then are one whose cry God will hear, and *whose tears he will put into his bottle,* and not suffer a Drop falling from the eye of a Penitent to be as Water spilt upon

upon the ground: *He will hear your cry, and deliver your soul from death. He will recover your feet from falling, that you may walk before him in the light of the living: Psal. 116. 8, 9. 13.* He will give you space and opportunity to live, and acceptably to serve him. He will hear your Prayers when you come unto him without the love of your Sins about you, or purposes to continue in them.

When *Noah* came out of the *Ark*, in which, faith one, he had long been *Buried* not Dead, his first Care was to Build an Altar unto the Lord, and to take of every Clean Beast, and of every Clean Fowl to offer in Burnt-Offerings. And the Lord smelt a sweet Savour; he took notice of the Purity of *Noah's* heart, and accepted of his Actions, and shew'd himself pleas'd with his Holy Intentions. But that which herein seems to be most observable, and to our purpose, was *Noah's* great Industry and Care for the right offering of this Sacrifice; And this was seen in his Building an Altar, and making Choice of such Beasts and Birds as were fit there-

on to be Offered. Now, Prayer is your best Sacrifice, which in Imitation of *Noah*, you are to offer unto the Lord with great Preparedness. For the want of this will betray in you a Prophane temper of Spirit, and a lack of a just Esteem and Reverence for God and his Service. And therefore according to *Siracides*, "*Before thou prayest prepare thy self, and be not as one that tempteth the Lord: Ecclus, 18. 23.*"

Let the Clean Beasts and Birds offer'd by *Noah*, mind you of keeping your Soul Clean and Pure from all wicked Resolutions and Affections; and to appear before the Lord empty of all Sinful Habits and Intentions. And let no Envy, Hatred, Malice, or any Uncharitableness, lodge in your Heart. For no Lusts of Carnal Uncleaness, no Filthiness of Spirit, no unsatiable and inordinate Love of the World, must possess your Soul when you lift it up to God. For you can never perform aright the great Duty of Prayer, unless your Heart be Penitent, and your Affections Pure. The Holiness of your
Person

Person makes the Prayer Holy, and the favour of your Sacrifice sweet in God's Nostrils. But if any wilful Sin lyes at the Door, it stops the passage of Prayer, and hinders it from being graciously heard. Put away then the evil of your Doings, and remove your inward Impurity, and be wholly Consecrated to God's Service, *And then shall your Prayer be set forth in his sight, as the incense, and the lifting up of your hands, shall be as the Evening sacrifice.* Psal. 141. 1. 2. For though you should outwardly appear never so Pure, and so carry your self that no Spot can be seen upon the Surface of your Actions, *Yet if you regard iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear you; Psal. 66. 18.* So that in short, your Preparation to Prayer consists in your Repentance for all the Sins whereof (upon the most diligent Scrutiny) you find your self to be Guilty; for every Sin whereof you do not Repent, will hinder the Power and Efficacy of your Prayer. And it will be with you as it was with *Joshua*, whose Prayer for *Israel* God

God utterly refus'd, *Because they had taken of the thing which was devoted unto him, and which had brought a curse upon them; Josh. 7. 10. 11.*

CHAP. VIII.

Graces necessary to Prayer.

AN D when you have thus swept the House, and cast all the Filth and Rubbish out of Doors, your next business is to see it Decently Furnish'd: For you are not only to Cleanse your Heart from noysom Lusts and Passions, but get it Replenish'd with such Graces and Vertues, Qualities and Dispositions, as are requir'd to Prayer. Now, Faith is the first of these Graces, and the Foundation of all the rest.

Of the use of Faith in Prayer.

Worship, you have heard, is that Great Duty which you owe to God, and
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by which in an especial manner you acknowledg his Godhead. And this Worship you are to perform both in Soul and Body. For both are his, and in both he will be Glorified and Worshipt. Now, Prayer is the Soul's part of this Worship, and is to be made in Faith, or otherwise it will not please God. *He that comes or prays to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Which Text implies, That you are not only to acknowledge the Essence of God, (which is done by the Internal Fiends,) but also to believe that he will give what you duly beg of him, and bountifully recompence your diligence in the Search and Performance of his Will. And believing this, you can find nothing fit to Tempt you to neglect God's Service. And altho' your Sincerity and Faithfulness therein should cost you dear, yet you are assured, that whatsoever Pains or Expences you bestow in his Service, it will be abundantly rewarded by your Gracious Master. And your Belief of this is the Ground
of

of your Entrance on God's Worship, and Perseverance in it. And as you may best shew your Faith by your observance of Prayer; so you may be thought to have little or no Faith, if you are seldom or never at your Devotion. But if once you come steadfastly to believe the Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of the Almighty, you can want no motives to Pray to him. There is no Promise annexed to any Prayer, but what is made in Faith: and for this you have the Authority of our Great Master, who told his Disciples, *That they should receive all things whatsoever they ask'd in Prayer, if they believ'd; Matth. 21, 22.* Not that Christ by those words gave you Toleration to ask whatsoever shall come in your fancy; for Prayer must be regulated by *Faith*, and *Faith* must not go beyond the bounds of the Word. But our Lord forbids you to trust and confide in your Self, and to rely on your own Strength and Abilites for the getting of what you want; he would have you by Prayer to apply your self to God

the Father in the Name of God the Son; and firmly to believe that what you beg in Christ's Name, will be granted you according to his Word, in *S. Mark II. 24. I say unto you what things soever ye desire, when ye Pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* Believing in this place, has respect to the Promise Christ made to all who call upon God in his Name. And it signifies your being thoroughly perswaded that God will grant the thing you beg of him in the Name of Christ, through whom alone your Prayers are Effectual and Prevailing. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. Jam. I. 5, 6.* If any man pray, let him pray with Confidence to be heard, and with a Mind resolv'd to stick fast to God, and steadfastly to adhere to the Doctrine and Practice of Christianity. And doing thus he has no reason to be Doubtful of the Divine Care and Protection. *The Prayer of Faith shall save the sick, and*
the

the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him; Jam. 5. 15.

Here are Display'd two wonderful Effects of those Prayers which proceed from Faith in Christ; First, they prevail with God for the Recovery, and Restoring of the Sick to his former Health; unless God has purpos'd to dispose of it otherwise for the Good of the Infirm, and his own Glory. Next, they shall prevail for the Pardon of the Sins, for which he is chastised of God with Sickness, if upon his Recovery he amend his Life. But still in granting your Prayers God has respect to his own Glory and your Benefit. And when the Granting what you Pray for is Inconsistent with either of these, he mercifully withholds his Hand from giving it. And seeing this Faith whereof we now speak, is the Gift of God, humbly beseech him to pour this most Excellent Gift into your Heart, and to work in you such a Faith as may be as an Hand to receive all his Favours: Be careful not to acquiesce in a dead, in-

effectual Faith, but in such a Faith as shews its self in good Works; and which inables you to overcome the World, and to conform to his Will in whom you believe,

To the end that you may Pray aright, take care when you enter upon this Service, to entertain your Mind with the serious Thoughts of God's Excellencies and Perfections: That his Mercy is over all his Works and endureth for ever; That he is Faithful, and without all Variableness or shadow of Change; That his Promises are *Yea* and *Amen*; That he is nigh to all that call upon him faithfully; and that he will (one way or other) fulfil the Desires of them that Fear him. With these and the like considerations, you may vigorate and enliven your Devotions with an Active Faith; and draw near and fall low at his Footstool, in full Assurance that his Ear is open, and his Hand stretcht out, to give you the things you long for, or some thing else, which in his Infinite Wisdom he knows to be
better

better for you. You are not alway to believe, you shall certainly receive every particular thing you Pray for : you cannot with any just confidence expect what God hath no where promis'd. And tho' he has absolutely promis'd you all things pertaining to Eternal Life, and Godliness ; yet as to the things appertaining to this present Life, he has limited his promise of them ; so that he will give or withhold them, as he sees them Necessary, Profitable, or Convenient for you. Seeing then that all the Promises of God are not of equal Extent, and seeing your Faith can go no farther than the Promises ; you cannot firmly believe, that you shall have every particular thing granted you, because you cannot certainly tell, whether this or that will be Beneficial, or Proper for you. For whatever you may imagine or conceive in your own Thoughts, it is God alone that knows that Infally, and therefore you cannot be assur'd that God will bestow it on you.

CHAP. IX.

Charity requir'd in Prayer.

AND as you are to pray in Faith, so likewise in Charity. This is a diffusive Grace, ready to do good, and extend it self to all. It takes the whole Race of Mankind into your *Litany*, and obliges you to pray according to our Saviour's Form, which teaches you to beg all the same Blessings for others, that you beg for you self. All your business in this Life, next to serving God, is to do all the Good you can to your self and others. And seeing by reason of the narrow and weak condition of your Nature, it is not in your Power to do all that is needful, you must therefore apply your self to him from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift; praying, that he out of his own infinite and inexhaustible Treasures, would supply the Wants of all Men. And seeing every one is in some Want or other, every

every one must have a share in your Prayers.

The forgiveness of your Trespases, is that which above all things you have absolute need to desire of God; for without this all other Blessings would be insignificant. But you have no reason to expect God should forgive you your Trespases, unless you forgive Men their Trespases. In the Petition you make for Pardon of your own Sins, you solicit your own Ruine, if you pardon not others their Sins: For in saying, Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us, you pray God would never pardon you, if you do not pardon others. How can you rationally desire Forgiveness from God, when you deny it to your Neighbour? The great Man in the Gospel who forgave his Servant a considerable Sum, when he desir'd it, charg'd the same anew upon him, when he refused to forgive his Fellow-servant a small Debt. *Matth.* 18. 23. His doing this so far provok'd his Lords indignation against him, that he gave him up to the Tormentors,

mentors. And thus will God deal with you, if you deal thus with your Fellow-Christians ; who can never so far trespass against you, as you do against God : Who will assuredly handle you as you do them. *If you forgive not men their trespasses, your heavenly father will not forgive you yours ; Matth. 6. 15.* And as the Goodness of God can in nothing be more Evident and Illustrious than in readily Forgiving those who beg his Pardon: So there is not any thing in which his Justice can be more Equal, than in dealing Severely with those, who deal Severely with their Brethren.

It's observable, that our Saviour took hold of frequent occasions to inculcate the Necessity of Mutual Charity, and that he made it the Badge whereby his Followers were to be distinguished from men of all other Religions. And to the end you might continually remember it, he inserted it into the Prayer which you are to use daily ; *"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ;—*And with what Face can you

you look up to the Father of Mercies with this Petition in your Mouth, if you want Compassion and Charity? How can you hope to prevail with your Crys and Importunities on God, as long as you have no Bowels your self towards your Neighbour. Remember it is the Rule of Gods Proceedings, *That he shall have Judgment without Mercy, who has shew'd no Mercy; Jam. 2. 13.*

And tho' Prayer be the best Sacrifice and the best Gift, you can bring to God's Altar, yet it will not be accepted at your hands, if your *Heart* be malicious, when you come to offer it. There were many things which under the Law would render the best of Sacrifices rather Offensive to Almighty God, than be of any Avail to him that offer'd them; and in like manner there is nothing which more effectually at once destroys the whole design of what is the True and Proper Christian Sacrifice, than Uncharitableness. If therefore you have any Pique, or Uncharitable Variance with your Neighbour, do all that in you lies to be reconcil'd to him,

him, before you present God with your Supplications. For Christ taught you this when he bad him, who brought his Gift to the Priest to be offer'd in Atonement for his Sins, that if he remember'd he had injur'd any man, he should leave his offering unrepresented, and repair to the person he had wrong'd, and to use Means to make him Friends with him, and then to come and compleat his intended Atonement.

Every wilful Sin is a Cloud interposing betwixt you and Heaven, and hinders the Ascension of your Prayers: but no cloud is so thick as *Uncharitableness*: This darkens the whole Heaven of Religious Exercises, rendering them void of all Efficacy and Advantage, for *Whatsoever you do without Charity, profiteth nothing*; 1 Cor. 13. 3.

God has made of one Blood, and Redeem'd by one Ransom, all Nations of Men, so that you are not to harden your Bowels against any that partake with you of the same Common Nature and Redemption. And therefore, if you want Tenderness of Heart,

Heart, you are humbly to importune the Father of Compassions, to give it you, that you may be deeply affected with the Miseries and Calamities of all Men, and imploy your Abilities for their Succour and Relief. Beg the *Holy Spirit of Love* to dwell in your Heart, and to cast out thence Malice, Hatred, and Uncharitableness, and to beget in you that *Pious, Generous Temper of Mind*, which seeks not only to please your self, but also your Neighbour for his Good to Edification. And seeing that all your doings without Charity are nothing worth, beseech God to pour into your Heart that most excellent Gift of Charity, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before him.

What was it that provok'd God to animadvert so severely upon Corah and his Accomplices, when they came to offer? Was their *Incense* unsavory? Or, were their *Censers* unhallow'd? Was their Altar profane? Or did they offer with Strange Fire? No, but the fault was in themselves, their Hearts were Proud and Stubborn, leaven'd with Envy

vy and Malice, and this was what kindled Gods Wrath, and provok'd him to an unheard of *Method of Destruction*. "*For they did not dye the common death, or as every one dieth, but the Lord made a new thing, and the earth open'd her mouth and swallow'd them up, and they went down quick into the pit; Numb. 16. 29, 30.* Malice made the offering of these Wretches unwelcome, and it still corrupts not only Prayer, but makes all other Solemn Acts of Religion to lose their Acceptance with the Almighty. For he has no Pleasure in Wickedness, neither can any evil dwell with him. *Such as be foolish shall not stand in his sight, and he hateth all them that work vanity; Psal. 5. 4, 5.* Such as run eagerly upon Sin, and are as 'twere mad to commit it, shall perish through their own imagination, and the Lord shall cast them out in the Multitude of their Transgressions. Their own Malicious, Uncharitable Designs of Mischief shall betray them to Ruin, and their *very Prayers shall become an Abomination unto the Lord, and be no more acceptable*

acceptable than was of Old the Presenting unto God what they had no Value for themselves, such as Unclean things, or the Refuse of their Flock.

God is obliged by Promise to prosper and crown your Fidelity in his Service, and to Defend, and with *his Favour, to compass you as with a Shield.* He will open his Ear to your Petitions, and hearken to the Voice of your Prayer, which you make in Faith and Charity; only have this always in Mind; "*That as there is a great Benefit in Prayer, so there is some Difficulty to discharge it aright:* And that it is Impossible to do this without due Preparedness. "Which being maturely consider'd by the Primitive Christians, they never began their Publick Prayers, till the Priest had raised their Minds with a Preparatory Introduction. To which Pious Custom our own Church had an Eye, when She Order'd him that ministers to Prepare the Congregation for Prayers with the Reading some select Sentences of Scripture,

pture, and after that is done, with a short Affectionate Exhortation. That by this means the People might be Stir'd up and Excited to a devout and reverent Deportment; and to *Draw nigh unto God with their Hearts, as well as their Lips.*

And from what has now been said you will be easily able to conclude, "That there is a Moral Impossibility
"your Prayers should prevail, while
"you remain Impenitent. And tho' one main Branch of your Prayer is, for the Remission of your Faults, yet you cannot expect this, till you resolve to forsake them. To confess and bewail with your Tongue the Sin you approve and cherish in your Heart, will make all your Prayers but an Heap of Indignities against God, and of Imprecations upon your self.

When therefore you come to Adore, Worship and Serve the Lord, your inward Thoughts and External Actions, are to be Purified from Sin by Sincere Repentance. *For God heareth not the impenitent, nor those who regard iniquity in their*

their heart ; *John 9. 31. Psal. 66. 18.*
 In a Word ; all the same Things that
 are requir'd of you, when you come
 to the Lord's Supper, are requir'd of
 you, when you come to Prayer : Name-
 ly, "*To examine your self whether you re-*
"pent you truly of your former sins, sted-
"fastly purposing to lead a new life ; have
a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ,
a thankful remembrance of his death, and
to be in charity with all men. And when
 you are thus rightly prepar'd to offer
 Prayers unto God, and rightly quali-
 fied, he will hear in Heaven, and from
 thence bless you in Christ Jesus.

Twenty First Sunday after Trinity.

GRant unto Us, we beseech thee Merciful Lord, (and to all thy Faithful People) Pardon and Peace, that we may be cleansed from all our Sins, and serve Thee with a quiet Mind, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

G

Twenty

Twenty Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, We beseech Thee, absolve us from our Offences; That through Thy bountiful Goodness we may all be deliver'd from the bands of those Sins, which by our Frailty we have Committed. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, Our Blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

CHAP. : X.

Circumspection at Prayer.

HAVING already given you an Account of that Preparation which is requir'd when you come to Prayer, and shewn the Necessity thereof, and wherein it consists: I am now to acquaint you with the *Circumspection* you are to use at the performance of this Great and Solemn Act of Religion.

By *Circumspection* I understand your care and diligence to deep your Soul
Devout,

Devout, and your Body Reverent during the time of Prayer.

And First, as for the *Circumspection* which regards the keeping of your Soul Devout, it does in a great measure consist in avoiding as far as possible, whatever may occasion the Wandering of your Thoughts in Prayer; which are chiefly such as now follow.

I. Inconstancy and Unsettledness of Mind; by reason whereof your Thoughts are distracted and divided contrary ways: an Emblem of this unhappy State of Man, with respect to the wandering of his Thoughts, has been ingeniously enough drawn out in the way of a Picture, wherein Christ is suppos'd to be hanging on the Cross, and the Worshippers upon their knees looking up to him, and breathing out the different aspirings of their Souls, according to the expression in the Gospel, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Out of the mouth of the one flows a Label directing itself in a strait line to the Wounds of a Bleeding Saviour,

Praying to be made Partaker of the Merits of the Blood that he shed: from the Mouth of the other are seen to proceed several Labels waving to and fro, some pointing one way and some another; some to the Fields and Rural Sports, and Diversions; others to the Sea, to Trade and Business; some are made up of corrupt Passions and Appetites, others are fill'd with unlawful Desires or the recital of sinful Pleasures past, and many other things of the like Nature. The first Man would not suffer any thing to interrupt or divert him in the Prayers he offer'd, but like a Beam of Light they swiftly, and directly made their way to their proper Object; the other did not mind what he was about, but gave his thoughts the Reins, and left them at liberty to ramble where they list. And though he may seem to look the same way as the other did, yet his mind is roving all the while, verifying the expression of the Prophet (quoted by our Saviour; *Matth.* 15. 8.) such a one may seem to draw nigh with his mouth and honour God with

with his lips, but his heart is far from him.

II. Carking immoderate Worldly Thoughts are the next thing which discompose your Mind, and beget in you diffidence and distrust in God, on whom you ought to cast all your Cares, as being *well assur'd that he careth for you*. And this, I conceive, was meant by S. Paul when he exhorted the *Philippians*, that in their Devotions they should be *careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, to make their requests known unto God*; *Phil. 4. 6.*

The Soul of it self is nimble and active, and in an instant can mount up to Heaven in Prayer, which is therefore call'd an *Elevation of the Soul*; *Psal. 25. 1.* But Earthly-mindedness keeps it fluttering below, and fastens its Affections to the Dust, which does so clog them, that they cannot aspire to the things above. You are therefore to take off the Weights which the World hangs upon your Thoughts, and which distract them in your Supplications.

For whilst you cherish immoderate Desires of the World, they will either hinder you from Praying at all, or from Praying as you ought.

III. Idleness and Sloth may be another occasion of the wandering of your Thoughts in Prayer. For perhaps you will not take pains to suppress and correct the Extravagances of your Thoughts, and to keep them within due Bounds and Measures. By which neglect your Soul becomes *like the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, which was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was broken down.*

But to whatever occasion the wandering of your Thoughts in Prayer may be imputed, it highly concerns you industriously to avoid them. And in a great measure you may be able to do this, if you use that due attention and zeal in Prayer, which you must own to be wholly requisite and needful.

And

And first, you must use all due Attention ; for by it you fix your Thoughts upon God, and frame to your self a strong and lively *Idea* of his Presence, and possess your heart with awful apprehensions of his Majesty : Ever having in mind that your Prayer is to him, *in whom you live, move, and have your being.*

When the *Jews* enter the Synagogue, they for a while stand silently in the posture of Prayer, before they begin it ; in which time they labour to affect their minds with his Glorious Attributes, whom they

*Buxtorf.
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l. 5.*

are come to Worship ; that the Consideration thereof may help the better to keep them from being vain and trifling. And one of their Masters taught his Scholars that before they began their Prayers, “ They should think a while on “ him to whom they make them. And it would doubtless much contribute to the restraint and amendment of that wandering in Prayer, to which you will find your self wonderfully prone, to consider in whose Presence you are, and the infinite disproportion that there is be-

twixt God and you. For you can no sooner consider that it is God to whom you speak in Prayer, but the Thought thereof will quicken your Attention, and render you apprehensive, and make you in a dread and surprize, if you find your self heedless and unconcern'd in so *Important a Business*, and in so *Great a Presence*.

Secondly, Attention is a proper cure for wandring in Prayer, because it keeps your Mind and Thoughts to every sentence and word thereof. For that Attention which is to accompany Prayer, is a settled and composed Temper of Mind, which gathers all your Thoughts together, and fixes them upon the Solemn Business you are about.

And tho' Idle, Impertinent, Wandring Thoughts, will be ever ready to thrust themselves upon you, and intrude into your Holy Offices, so that you cannot be always totally free from them, yet by Attention you may much hinder and keep them from making any stay, or getting the Dominion over you so far as to corrupt or captivate the Will. So
that

that, notwithstanding that this Wandering, to which you are liable, may be your Unhappiness, yet it can never be your Sin, as long as you strive against it, and deny it your Approbation and Consent. And tho' you can never entirely conquer this Wandering of your Thoughts in Prayer, yet you may restrain and deal with it as *Abraham* with the ravenous Birds, which he continually *Drove away, when they came to devour his Sacrifice*; *Gen. 15. 11,*

Causinus, (who was no contemptible Director of Devotion) advises his Suppliant to stay upon every Sentence in Vocal Prayer, the space of a breathing, and in that time to ponder the Words he pronounces, and to consider the Person to whom he speaks, and his own Unworthiness. He would likewise have him so to apply the Prayer, as if it had been made for his own particular use; and to espouse all the Affections which the Composer of the Prayer had when the Holy Ghost moved him to compose it, and assisted him in the Composition.

But

But your want of Attention will hinder you from the observation of this advice, and will also hinder God from regarding your Prayers. For can you expect God should attend to the Prayers, to which you do not attend your self? Can you hope that he with a Paternal kindness and affection should open his Ears to those, who are not serious before him? If at the same time you call to Heaven, your Thoughts are so set upon Earthly concerns, so that when you have done Praying, you scarce know what you have been doing; is not this *to offer the sacrifice of Fools? Who are rash with their mouth and hasty in their heart to utter any thing before God; not considering that he is in the heavens, and they on the earth: Eccles. 5. 2.* You are not then to run over your Prayers *by Rote*, but with recollected Thoughts to Weigh, and be Attentive to what you say unto him, with whom is Terrible Majesty, and who is a consuming Fire.

Thirdly, 'Twould not a little conduce to your exercise of Attention,

in Prayer, if you would consider that the *Perfection* of your Prayers is according to the degrees of your *Attention*, and that the more Attentive you are in Prayer, the greater benefit you receive by it. And here one way to mend your Attention, is, to repeat the Prayer again wherein you have found it defective, and to continue this course till you find your heedlessness worn off and removed. For by this means you will defeat the Devil, who occasions your unattentiveness by injecting wicked Thoughts into your mind, and presenting you with amusing objects. But it would be Satans interest to give over tempting you thus to Wander in Prayer, if once he finds your sense of it arming you against such Wandring, and quickning your Attention, and rendering you more circumspect.

Now, this *Repetition* comes not within the compass of that which our Lord censur'd for vain and idle. *Matth. 6. 7.* For in this case you do not repeat your Prayers over and over, out of a conceit that God will the sooner be mov'd

mov'd to hear you; or that by your Repetition he better understands your meaning (which was the Opinion of those Heathens, whose Repetition of their Prayers was condemn'd by our Saviour:) but the Repetition now spoken of is to mend your Incogitancy, and Thoughtlesness of the Business you are about. For it is not the tumbling out of so many words, or of the same words over and over again, or the Length and Multitude of them, that is pleasing unto God, any farther than as they express the fervency of your Spirit, the Importunity of your Zeal, and the greatness of your Wants. But if you affect Length and Repetition in Prayer, either out of Hypocrisie or Vainglory, it will be so far from pleasing God, and prevailing with him, that it will have a quite contrary effect. And this you may conclude from our Saviours carriage in this Particular, who disliking the Heathens Length and Vociferation in Prayer, gave his Disciples a short, comprehensive Form, which they were to use and imitate in their calling upon God.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, When you find out the Wandring of your Thoughts, and that you are ready to mind any thing rather than that you should, there is no such Cure for this as Attention. For by it you instantly recal your self to your Business, and to a serious minding of what you are about. And you will soon perceive your obligation to do this, when you consider that without doing it, you slight one of the most Eminent Parts of God's Worship, "*By drawing nigh unto him with your lips, when your heart is far from him.*" Besides, if you exactly weigh your lack of Attention, you will find it has in it a great degree of Atheism. For not to Attend to what you say, when you speak unto God, betrays in you a low esteem of his Majesty, and that you have mean, unworthy Thoughts of the Godhead; which has ever been accounted a piece of the vilest Atheism. Call home then your roving Thoughts, and employ them in what you are about. Get as near Heaven as you can, and have your mind there, and there only.

only. For unless this be your care and practice when you offer to God the Sacrifice of Prayer, you will be but like the Cheat in *Mitarch*; "Who brought unto the Altar of his Idol the Skeleton of an Ox cover'd with a fair hide, pretending that he offer'd a goodly Sacrifice of Flesh and Entrails, when indeed there was nothing but a skin full of bones. You would count him a vain Thoughtless Person, worthy of Ridicule and Contempt, who coming to beg his Life of his Prince, should give over his Suit to run after a Butterfly. And yet this is your figure, when in Prayer you suffer your mind to be carried away to impertinent objects, and fasten your Thoughts to the things which you ought to avoid thinking on. Can you hope (as was but now intimated) God should incline His ears to the Prayers, to which you will not incline your own? That he should regard your Petitions, when you do not regard them your self? You may easily observe your aptness to heedlessness at Devotion; and how many things,

things, all foreign to what you are about, do interpose when you fall down upon your Knees ; you may find to your sorrow, the Common Enemy tampering with your Heart, at the same time your tongue is speaking unto God. 'Tis therefore necessary to recollect your self, to fix your mind when you come before the Almighty, and to affect your Soul with this consideration ; " That you are not sure of another opportunity to solicit him with your Prayers.

But if through the frailty of humane Nature you cannot always exercise that Attention, which is necessary to restrain your wandring in Prayer ; then beg of God to assist your frailty, and to establish your Attention against all avocations. And (tho' they may steal upon you at Devotion) that he would enable you by his Grace to reject them. And if after all you cannot be rid thereof, be sure to give them no encouragement, but to deny them your approbation and consent. For when you do sincerely strive against them,
God

God will either crown your endeavour with conquest over them, or pardon them if they prove invincible. But if the want of attention in Prayer be the fruit of your own wilful Negligence, you can hope neither for God's assistance nor his pardon, whilst this negligence is continued.

CHAP. XI.

Zeal in Prayer.

Zeal is another help against the wandering of your thoughts in Prayer. Now Zeal is a sacred warmth and fervour of Mind, and an affectionate earnestness to have your Prayers heard. For it is not enough that you keep your Thoughts to what is utter'd by him that ministreth in the publick Service, and to ponder and mind every word he speaks, but you must do it with intention and fervency. For both all wandering, and all deadness in Prayer must be driven away. True Zeal will melt

melt and dissolve your heart, and make you cry unto God with the utmost strength of Spirit : and it will move you to be wholly bent to obtain what you crave. A cold indifferent Suitor seldom prevails with Men. For if a begger should ask relief at your hands, and do it in so loose a manner, as that he seem'd indifferent whether he had it or no, you would think he had either little Want, or great Pride ; and so have no heart to relieve him. Now, the things you beg of God are so much above the rate of any ordinary Alms, that you can never expect they should be given you, if you are slight and heavy in asking them. When you apprehend, and fully consider, the matter of your Prayer, and add to it a devout earnestness of desire, then may your Devotion be truly said to be Zealous. And tho' this quality chiefly resides in the Soul, yet it often appears in the gestures of the Body. As was seen in *Moses* ; who when he made intercession for *Israel*, "*Fell down before the Lord, forty days, and forty nights,*"
H "and

"and did neither eat bread nor drink
 "water, because of all the sins that Israel
 "had sin'd, in doing wickedly in the sight
 "of the Lord to provoke him to anger.
 "Deut. 9. 18. And the Zeal of this
 meekest of Men, was more than ordi-
 nary, when he desir'd God rather to blot
 him out of his BOOK, than that he
 should execute his menaces against Is-
 rael. Elias cast himself upon the earth
 to expresse his Earnestness in praying for
 Rain. And the ever Blessed Jesus con-
 tinued all night in Prayer, and offer'd up
 his supplications with strong crying and
 tears; Luke 6. 12. Heb. 5. 7. And pray'd
 with such Ardour and Affectionateness,
 that the sweat fell from him to the ground,
 as if it had been great drops of blood;
 Luke 22. 44. And this zeal and ear-
 nestness seems to have been meant by
 S. Paul, when he exhorted Believers to
 be instant in Prayer: Rom. 12. 12. "To
 "strive in prayer: Rom. 15. 30. To la-
 bour frequently in prayer: Col. 4. 12. Night
 and day to pray exceedingly: To pray al-
 ways with all prayer: praying earnestly.
 1 Thes. 3. 10. Eph. 6. 18. 1 Pet. 4. 7.
 Jam.

Jam. 6. 7. By all which sacred Texts, that Zeal and Vehemency seems to be enjoin'd, which I now recommend as an excellent help against the wandring of your thoughts in Prayer.

Which is a fault whereof you can not be guilty, when you pray with spiritual Affection, with ardent Desire, with a fervent Mind, and with a Heart inflam'd with that Zeal which the Holy Ghost kindles in it. God regards not the Prayers which you offer, when you do not stir up your Affections, and chase your desires, and move your mind into a warmth. The Great Ruler of the world will not listen to cold, lukewarm Devotions. Such Prayers can never reach Heaven which want Zeal and Love, the only Wings that should carry them thither.

Be careful then when you approach God, to raise up your Soul to the highest pitch of Zeal and Earnestness that you are able : And because that of your self you are not able to do this, beseech the Divine Omnipotence to inflame your Heart with the heavenly fire of Devo-

tion; and when it is obtain'd, beware of quenching it with wilful sin, or letting it go out again for want of fuel, or stirring up and imploying it.

And there want no Motives to beget in you this Fervency in Prayer, when you consider God's wonderful kindness, and carry the thoughts thereof through your whole Devotion. For, to think that he is not only good by Nature, but also in communicating his Benefits: That he is ready upon your Repentance, to blot out your transgressions and to be merciful to your Sins. Such Thoughts as these are good inward motives to raise your heart into Zeal, *When you lift up your voice, and call upon the Lord, either in his house, or your own.*

And First, when you come to the Lord's house, to joyn in publick Prayers, you have a good opportunity to shew your Earnestness and Zeal. God has Promis'd a special blessing to the joynt Requests which the Faithful make in his *House*, and that He will be in the midst of them, and bestow

bestow his Mercies, and set marks of Favour on them, when they meet together *in the unity of the spirit, and in the bond of peace.* And your absence from the Publick Prayers cannot be excus'd without an important occasion; for if it be wilful and deliberate, you cut your self off from the Church and from the partaking of those Prayers, wherein all are in common concern'd. And by this means you inflict a punishment upon your self (even a sort of Excommunication) which is never inflicted by the Church, but in case of the most heinous offences.

The same Zeal and Attention are also requisite in the Prayers made in your Family, which are a sort of *Common-Prayers*, because all the Members of the Household joyn therein. And it belongs to the Master of the Family carefully to provide for this office; and to see nothing be wanting for the welfare of their Souls, who are under his Government. For the Family is Heathenish where God is not worshipt; and where the Master does not resolve

with Joshua, *That he, and his house will serve the Lord.* Josh. 24. 15.

And as to the Prayers you make apart, when you are *solus cum solo*, and have no witness of what you do, but only God and your Conscience; yet because that even here you are subject to Wandring and Distraction, as well, as you are in company, you have need of the same Zeal and Attention to correct it.

In your private Devotions you may be more particular, according to your personal Necessities, and you may use therein a greater freedom both in words and gestures, than you can in publick. But still the Devotion of the Heart is therein requir'd, as being that which God principally regards. And as it is your duty to perform all these sorts of Prayers, so it is likewise your duty to be Zealous and Attentive at them all. Prayer in your Family and Closet, will not excuse your Prayer at Church; all are requir'd, all are necessary, and one must not be taken in exchange for the other, "*And whosoever is diligent*" in

*" in publick Prayer, and yet negligent in
" private, it is to be fear'd he rather seeks
" to approve himself to men than to God.*

Which is contrary to the mind of our Saviour, who commands you to Pray to God in secret ; and from him alone to expect your Reward, and not from the vain praises of Men. You have been often told *That Prayer is that part of divine worship, which the Soul is to pay unto the Lord ;* and you have also been told, with what Circumspection it ought to be perform'd. Give me leave to conclude this particular with observing, that tho' Prayer be a spiritual duty, and the proper business of the Soul, yet the Body has its share and part therein. For both being God's workmanship and purchase, both ought to give him homage and observance. Now, the observance the Body ought to pay unto God in Prayer, consists in such lowly, decent, and reverent gestures, as may testify the humility and reverence of the Soul. Bowing, prostration, and the like external acts of Religious Worship, are a particular right

belonging to God ; before whom you are *to fall down and kneel, for he is your maker, your shepherd, your protector.* The Royal Author of the 95. Psalm, does affectionately call upon every one joyntly to adore, worship, and pray unto God ; and to make the members of the Body, the partners and witnesses of the real devotion of the Heart, and to joyn inward and outward reverence together: That the submissive and lowly gestures of the Body may serve to expresse and signifie the sincere humility of the Soul. For tho' the humblest external bodily gestures are the least considerable thing in Prayer, as having little or no proportion to the necessary dispositions of the Soul ; yet they are of such moment, that if you pray, without them, it looks as if you did not consider or know what a weighty business you are about, nor had a sense of God's Dignity, or of your own Vileness. But in these bodily Gestures you are carefully to avoid whatsoever is vain, fantastical, and superstitious ; and to keep within the bounds of decency and prudence.

And

And your gestures being thus conducted, they will help to heighten inward Devotion in your self, and be an happy means to raise the Devotion of others. But I leave the farther prosecution of this particular, to consider of the Frequency you ought to use in Prayer.

C H A P. XII.

Of Frequency in Prayer.

THough Prayer be a Duty, which you are never to neglect, yet there is not any Text in Scripture that determines how often you are to use it. The Inspired Word positively commands you to call upon God, but it has left it to your Conscience how frequently you are to do it. The Scripture that is most peremptory in this particular, is, *1 Thes. 5. 17.* where *S. Paul* exhorts to *Pray without ceasing.* By which Text you are certainly obliged to these two things, *viz.*

1. Not

1. Not to grow restive in Prayer, but therein to be constant and persevering, it being an homage you are to pay continually to God, and that without which you can never hope to be safe and prosperous. For Praying gives you a title to God's safeguard and preservation, and it must be as lasting as your own wants, and obligation to worship God. And therefore till you find you have no need of God's Mercies, nor any tye upon you to adore him, you must *Pray without ceasing*. Which words imply,

Secondly, That your Prayers under the Gospel, must bear proportion with the *Daily Sacrifices* under the Law, which were constantly offer'd Morning and Evening. And you cannot sink your Prayers to a lesser proportion, or pray seldomer than Morning and Evening. It being highly reasonable and necessary that you should begin all your works with calling upon God for his direction and blessing; and end them with praise and thanks for his protection and assistance.

Some

Some have interpreted the Apostles words (*Pray without ceasing*,) of spending every moment of their life in Prayer; which can be no error, if it be understood of such an excellent frame of Spirit, and pious disposition of Mind, as is alway in readiness to call upon God. This religious temper and habitual devoutness of Soul, is like the Holy fire of the Sanctuary, which never went out: For it is always ready to flame in pious ejaculations and affectionate breathings after God. And when for want of meet circumstances your Prayers cannot be Vocal, yet they may be Mental. And in this sense you may be said to pray *without ceasing*, which according to *Diodati*, is to be understood rather of the heart and affection, than of the tongue and words.

And tho' you have not always leisure and opportunity to be upon your knees, yet you never want either to bow your heart before God, and by a pious temper of mind, and spirit of Devotion, to lift it up to the Lord. And notwithstanding the Scripture has left the frequency of Prayer

Prayer undetermined, yet you may take your measures as to publick Prayers, from the Rules of the Church; and in your private Devotions from the examples of Holy Men.

And first, the Rules of the Church acquaint you with the stated times of Publick Prayer, from which you are not to be absent, when you can possibly be at them. And it must be a matter of considerable moment that can justify your absence from the Lords House at the set times of Prayer. Now according to some Expositors you may be said to *Pray without ceasing*, when you observe the *hours or times of Prayer*, appointed by the Church. But if you were not enjoyn'd to observe such *stated times of Prayer*, yet the very *Light of Nature*, and the *Law of Piety*, would oblige you to observe them. For both these teach you to omit no occasion to express your Duty to God: "Which consists in worshipping him, giving him thanks, calling upon him, honouring his holy Name and his word, and serving him truly all the days of our life.

And

And as to Frequency in your Private Devotion, you have the Examples of Holy men in Scripture for your Guide. And first of David, *Who, evening, morning and at noon, did cry unto the Lord and he heard his voice; Psal. 55. 17.* With his constant importunity he re-inforc'd an impression of his Prayers upon God, the better to move him to grant them. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up; Psal. 5. 3.* This religious Prince made the first fruits, and prime of the day to present his supplications before God; and after the manner of earnest Petitioners he fix'd his eyes on heaven, resolving to wait and never to move, till the Lord hearken'd unto the voice of his Prayer; nay, from thrice, David increas'd his praying to *seven times a day, Psal. 119. 164.* rightly concluding, that he could never sufficiently admire and magnifie the Divine Excellencies; and that if he had had nothing else to be the matter of his praises, yet he thought himself bound continually to extol them. It's true, the phrase (*seven times*)

times) may be taken in a larger sense, and not meerly to signifie that number, but be look'd upon as a *mode of speech*, denoting a great frequency in Prayer, and shewing that *David* was daily very often imploy'd therein ; which custom to pray often was not peculiar to *David* only, but was also used by God's people many hundred years after he saw corruption. As was seen in *Daniel*, who when he knew the Dead-warrant was sign'd for his execution, *Went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneel'd upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime ; Dan. 6. 10.* The last words shew, that it was not an emergent zeal, or an extraordinary fit of Devotion, but that it was his constant and usual practice, to pray thrice a day, which was the common custom of the *Jews* ; who made *Morning, noon, and evening the three times of prayer ; Acts 3. 1. and 10. 4. and 9. 31.* which custom was observ'd also by the Apostles, and some Devouter Christians went farther, and pray'd six times

times a day, taking in the *Compline*, or the Prayer made by good men at nine at night.

But if you should imagine these examples to be imitable, and that it would exhaust too much of your time to be so often on your knees; then revolve with your self;

1. That you are never so far to immerse and bury your self in worldly business, as not to allow space to begin and end the day with Prayer. And you cannot justly complain you want time to be thus often in Devotion, when you consider how much time you can find to cast away, if not upon that which is *vicious*, yet upon that which is wholly *impertinent* to your Station. If you would prudently retrench your Recreations, and imploy in *Piety* the hours you spend in *Vanities*, you would never be straitned for time to bestow in Devotion. The true reason of your having so *little* time to give to this is, because you lavish so much away in things of so little moment, if not worse, that when it is past you cannot but condemn your self for it.

But

But seeing you must one day give an account of the spending of your time, it behoves you to be wary how you spend it. And the more time you have wastfully mispent already, the more signally careful you ought to be of that which yet remains. And to redeem the hours you have thrown away upon Impietie, by a vertuous and religious imployment of those God shall yet please to vouchsafe you.

Consider, Secondly, how reasonable and just a thing it is, that you allow a liberal portion of your time to his service, who is graciously pleas'd to allow so much to your own. God does not grudge you space enough for your lawful Business, and necessary Diversions; but then he expects you would not encroach upon those minutes which are appointed to Religious Exercises. It is very observable, That men of Highest Stations, and Weightiest Imployments, have been the most frequent and diligent in their Devotions. And of this truth you have two known, famous examples of *David* and *Daniel*, the one a King, the other

other a prime Minister of State, yet the one prays seven, and the other three times a day.

Consider, thirdly, how disingenuous and unthankful it would be in you, to repine at the allowance of a small parcel of your time to the service of the Great Master of Heaven and Earth; if you believe it to be just and reasonable to require so many hours service every day from those that stand in the same relation to your self. But as to the parcels of time you are to allow to private Devotion, they must be proportion'd to the nature of your Station and necessary Business; and to be no more, or longer, than will consist with your urgent Affairs and be no prejudice to them. And that you have time enough to do this, without hindering the due discharge of the Duties of your calling, or even your necessary, honest Diversions, will be evident, if you consider, the nature of Devotion in general, and in particular, wherein the private consists.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Nature of Devotion, &c.

AND First, as to the nature of Devotion in general, it is such an exercise of the Soul, as may for the greatest part be transacted without interrupting the actions of the Body. So that you need not always closet your self, and lay aside your honest Affairs, to be Devout.

Devotion is the entertaining of pious, useful and wise Thoughts in your Mind: it puts you upon weighing every thing you do, and reflecting on whatever you have done amiss. It moves you to look forward to the temptation that approaches you, and puts you upon arming your self against it with serious thoughts of Heaven and Hell. And when your Mind is really devout, it moves you to look up to the former with earnest *desires* and endeavours to *gain* it, and down to the latter, with incessant *care* to *escape* it.

Now, you may do all this in the greatest throng of your worldly Concernments.

For

For Devotion is an act of the Soul, whose motions are so nimble and sprightly, that they have but little dependence on the Body: which latter can scarce be ever so taken up, as to keep the former from being devout. For what bodily Employment can hinder you from lifting up your heart, *even lifting it up unto the Lord?* what Business can restrain your Soul from sending up its affectionate Ejaculations, holy Wishes, and devout Vows unto God? If you have an implicit desire upon all opportunities to advance the Glory of God, if you Eat, and Drink, and Sleep and recreate your self moderately to this end, to enable you to serve God the better, and so incorporate, and interweave such religious Thoughts and Ejaculations, among your Natural, Moral, and Civil Employments (so they be lawful and necessary, and not sordid and servile) you make your common actions to become works of Piety, and exercises of Religion. What office of your Calling can keep you from considering every morning the Temptations to which that day you may be liable, and how you may best strengthen

and fore-arm your self against them? What business can be so urgent and hasty, as not to give you time every morning to recommend your self to God, in some short, devout and zealous Prayer?

And what great pains or time will it cost you, to take every evening an account of your Actions of the past day, and with humble importunity to beg God to pardon such as have been evil, and to render him thanks that he has enabled you to do any that are otherwise; and that he has deliver'd you from any evil of Sin or Danger? And having thus begun and concluded the day, you may comfortably commit your self to God's Mercy and Protection; whose only guard is abundantly sufficient to keep you secure: And then close your meditations with that of the Psalmist, "*I will lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.*"

And this plain constant course of private Devotion, is that which was enjoyn'd by our Blessed Lord, *Matth. 6.* when he bad you go to your Closet, and there to shut the doors after you. And there is
at

at least a great convenience, if not a necessity, of doing thus: First, because you may have many Sins to beg pardon for, and many particular Mercies to implore, and many Wants to be supply'd, and many Graces to be obtain'd, which are not so fit for you to pray for in Publick. And therefore you are to go to him who is in Secret, and to whom you may unbosom yourself without fear of Discovery or Reproach.

Secondly, This constant, daily course of Private Devotion, will beget in your mind both an Awe, and Affection to God, and also make you in love with this Duty, because it brings you to a familiarity with him. Besides this Custom in Private Devotion will wear off all the surmised difficulties thereof, and make it become easie and pleasant. And when it is duly managed you will find it so far from interfering either with your lawful Employment, or your necessary Recreation; that it will pleasantly mingle and associate with both.

You read how the unjust Judge, in the Parable, granted the Widow's Suit, not out of love to Justice, but for his own

Ease, *Lest by her continual coming she should weary him ; Luke 18.5.* The design of the Parable, is first to instruct frequency and perseverance in Prayer, and that therein you are neither to be negligent nor tyr'd. Next, it shews the efficacy and force of constant Devotion, and importunate Prayer, and how mightily therewith God is wrought upon ; and another illustration hereof you have in the Man that went to borrow Bread of his Neighbour, Tho' his Neighbour had lock't his doors, and himself and all his Family were gone to bed, and when the respect of friendship would not work upon him, yet the Borrower shewing his real Want by coming at that time of night, his confidence in the Man to whom he came, prevailed with him to rise, and to lend him as many Loaves as he needed. *Luke 11.*

But you have not only Parables, but Instances of the power that persevering importunate Prayer has with the Almighty. For *Moses* by it so far prevailed as to put a sort of force upon God, a kind of necessity of sparing *Israel*, when they had provok'd him to destroy them, *Exod. 32.*
And

And by it also *Jacob* wrestled with God so long till he got the better, and came off with a new name, which declar'd him Victor. For God said unto him, *Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a Prince hast thou power with God and men, and hast prevailed,* Gen. 32.28.

And both these Parables and Examples recommend to your practice, earnestness and perseverance in Prayer. Wherein you need not fear being too instant and pressing, especially in those supplications which you make to God for a vertuous and holy life, while you live here, and for an happy and glorious Immortality when you go hence. For these are the things for which you may pray absolutely, and which God will certainly grant through Jesus Christ the Righteous. *To whom, &c.*

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost Govern all things in Heaven and Earth; Mercifully hear the Supplications of thy People, and grant us thy Peace all the days of our Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GRant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without Thee may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy Will, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAP. XIV.

The Things to be Pray'd for.

I Am now come to the last Thing I propos'd, to present you with, viz. an Account of the Matter of Prayer, or the Things you are to beg of God; which are only such as he has in his Word promis'd to give: and which for substance are all compris'd in the Sacred Form, emphatically stil'd *The Lord's Prayer*. Now, this Prayer is of like use with the Decalogue, and is to be the Rule of your Petitions, as that is of your Actions. And as you need do no more than what is set down in the Decalogue, so you need desire no more than what is contain'd

in

in the Lord's Prayer. To the Heads of which all your Prayers are to be restrain'd, and you are to use in them the like Simplicity and sober Brevity, that is us'd in this.

And both the Decalogue and Lord's Prayer are of the same extent, both teaching you your Duty to God, your Neighbour, and your Self. The Decalogue teaches you what you are to do, to each of these, and the Lord's Prayer teaches you how you may beg of God to do them as you ought. And as the *Ten Commandments* were twice given by God the Father, so was the *Lord's Prayer* twice given by God the Son: once at the request of his Disciples. S. *Luke* 11. 1, 2. and a Second time of his own accord, S. *Matth.* 6. 9. And when our Lord gave this Prayer he intended it to be the true Sum of all Christian Prayers; and that none were to ask any thing of God but what was therein comprehended.

For (1.) There is not any thing that you need desire, respecting your Duty to God, which is not with wonderful plainness

ness (considering the brevity) summ'd up in the three first Petitions of this Prayer. The first whereof regards your glorifying of God's Name; The second the establishing of his Authority and Dominion, in your heart; and the last, your Submission and Obedience to his Will. Which comprise all that you need desire of God in order to the right performance of your Duty towards him.

And in the first place it teaches you to pray for the hallowing and glorifying of God's Name. By his *Name* you are to understand in General God Himself; and in particular his Glorious Titles and Perfections, together with every thing that has a peculiar relation to him; as his *Word*, his *Day*, his *House*, &c. For as you owe to all these an awful, humble Reverence and Devotion, so you are to beg of God to stir up your heart, and to assist you to pay it as you should. That he would enable you so to carry your self toward all Things belonging to his *Being* and *Service*, as that all may see you sincerely Honour and Worship his Adorable *Essence* and Excellencies :

encies : For seeing God, who is the Sovereign Holiness, has been pleas'd to reveal himself as it were by a proper Name, and to take unto him the endearing Title of *Father*, honouring all Believers with the relation of his Children; it is your Duty to beg, that he would give you Grace, to Glorifie him both in Word and Deed, and that you may be an instrument of causing him to be Honor'd by all men ; and that neither by you, nor by your means, his Sacred Name may at any time be profan'd.

And this Hallowing of God's Name is the first thing you are taught to pray for, and the foundation of all the rest. For unless you Glorifie God, and Magnifie him above all Things ; unless you acknowledge his Supreme Majesty, and Superlative Goodness ; you are not fit to Pray for the coming of his Kingdom. Which Kingdom is threefold, *viz.* one of Power, whereby he ruleth over all Creatures : another of Grace, whereby he ruleth in the hearts of Believers, by his Word and Spirit : and a third of Glory, which in a more Eminent man-

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ner shall begin at the last Judgment : when Christ as man, shall deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father ; and when all the Saints shall be taken in to Reign with him. And the coming of all these Kingdoms makes up the Second request of the Lord's Prayer ; for therein you desire that God would exercise his Power in subduing, and his Justice in punishing his Enemies ; that by this means the World may be freed from that Impiety and Confusion, wherewith it abounds ; and that every one may say, *Verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth : Psal. 58. 11.* and plainly discern that this World is not govern'd by Chance, but administred and manag'd by an Almighty, All-wise, and most Just Providence. And as it is your Interest and Happiness, so it ought to be your Prayer, that God's Kingdom may be visible and his Authority exercised, to the end, that his Faithful Servants may be safe from their Adversaries, and have their Necessities reliev'd, and their Desires accomplish'd.

Next,

Next, you are to pray for the coming of God's *Kingdom of Grace*; that he would mercifully establish his Throne and Dominion in yours and in the hearts of all men; That the Gospel may be Universally Embrac'd; and that they who are now slaves to Satan, and their own vile affections, may be converted, and renounce the Devil, and profess themselves Subjects of Jesus; doing his Works, observing his Precepts and paying him Tribute, Homage and Subjection, as their Liege Lord. And whereas you daily see that God's Laws are broken, his Messengers despised, his Word and Sacraments neglected, and every thing belonging to his Solemn Worship set at nought by some, and ridicul'd by others; you are in Charity oblig'd to pray for a better face of Affairs, "And that he who is the giver of all Goodness would send his Grace unto you and to all People, that you may Worship him, Serve him and Obey him, as you ought to do. And that your unruly Passions may be tam'd, your rebellious Lusts mortified, your naughty Desires extinguish'd, and every

every opposing Thought subdued. So that Christ may have an absolute Command over your whole Man, Body and Soul, and that you may be happy in his Government.

And as for God's *Kingdom of Glory*, or the Glorious Manifestation of Christ's coming to dispense a final Pardon to his Faithful Subjects, and to admit them to the Participation of his Joy and Authority: and to pronounce a direful Sentence upon his obstinate Enemies; sending them to be Tormented with the Devil and his Angels; even for the Coming of this Kingdom you are also to pray, saying with the Holy ones under the Altar, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

CHAP. XV.

A farther Account of the Things to be Pray'd for.

AND having Pray'd God thus to rule in your heart by Grace, that you may be fit for his coming in Glory to Crown his Servants, and Torment his Enemies;

Enemies; you are to Pray again that God would enable you to do both his secret and revealed Will, and that you may patiently and contentedly submit to the former; and readily and cheerfully perform the latter, as far as it is set down in his Holy Word. Now Obedience to God's Law and Submission to his Providence, are both requir'd to the doing of his Will. For you are not only to observe what he enjoyns or prohibits, but also to submit to whatever happens to you according to his Good Will and Pleasure, whether it be Misery or Happiness. And he who taught you to do thus did illustrate it with his own Example, when with an admirable Resignation he Pray'd, *Not mine, O Father, but thy Will be done.*

Now the manner of your *Doing God's Will*, is taken from the Pattern of the Holy Angels, who are God's ministring Spirits, executing his Commandments with readiness, fidelity and perseverance; flying upon his errand with the wings of Love and Zeal. But seeing you find (perhaps) in your self a reluctancy to do

do thus, and that your Duty herein is often delay'd through Idleness, or interrupted through Vanity, so that your Obedience moves heavily and is clogg'd with fears, and broken off by temptations; you are to supplicate the Father of all Mercies, that he would bestow upon you that Zeal and Affection for his Service, wherewith the Holy Angels are Inspired: to the intent that you may as they, do his Will with Fervency and Chearfulness. And that following the Examples of their Obedience, whilst you are on Earth, you may be joyn'd with them, and your blessed Brethren in Glory, to sing eternal Praises in Heaven.

And as our Lord in the three first Petitions of his Prayer compris'd all things respecting God and his Glory, for which you are to Pray: So in the next three Petitions he has sum'd up whatsoever you have need to desire, respecting your own or your Neighbours Wants and Necessities. And you may observe that the things relating to God's Glory, are by our Saviour's Prescription first to be solicited, and if this be rightly done, you can
fear

scarce miss of the rest. For all other things shall be given to them, *Who first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*; *Matth. 6. 33.* And seeing God's Glory is of greater moment than yours or any man's Wants, therefore you are to Pray for the first. And yet seeing you are neither all *Flesh*, nor all *Spirit*, but a compound of both, and that both have Needs to be supplied, you are to Pray for the relief of both.

And first you are to beg a supply for your Bodily Necessities, all which our Lord comprehended under the name of Bread. Which *Word* signifies outward comforts. And in Praying God to give you this, you declare your sole dependance to be on him for this present life, and for all things that support it. And the begging them of God, declares likewise your abhorrence of all unjust and indirect ways to obtain them.

Next, by the adjunct (*Daily*) added to Bread, you evidence your contentedness with present necessities, and your purpose to Pray continually for them. Which likewise declares your trust in

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God;

God; and that you cast your Cares upon him; acknowledging that all you have or expect, are from his bounteous Hand, and sanctified by his Blessing.

And this Petition for *Daily Bread* was no doubt taken from that Prayer of the *Jews*, which was thus; "The necessities of thy People *Israel* are many, and their knowledge small (so that they know not how to disclose their Necessities) let it be thy good Pleasure to give to every man what sufficeth for food, &c.

And the Petition for *Daily Bread* is by some thus paraphras'd, "Provide for us to morrows Bread, and give it us to day, that we be not solicitous for to morrow: for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

All things needful for this present life come from God, and the Petition for *Daily Bread*, shews that you are not to desire them all at once, but that he would distribute them by little and little, according as you need them. That by this means you may never be destitute of, nor desist in Praying for them.

For

For if you should possess them in too great abundance, and as it were in a heap, you might be in danger to rest contented within your self, and forget to call upon the Lord; *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. Christ in this Petition for (*Daily Bread*) seems to have reflected upon the sending of the *Manna* and as that was daily gather'd, so this might be daily begg'd and given.

Some of the Fathers have Allegoriz'd this Petition, and understood it of *Christ* the *Bread of Life*, and the partaking of him in the *Blessed Eucharist*: which does nourish the Soul unto Life Eternal, as material Bread does the temporal Life of the Body. And tho' I could wish that in this sense the Request for (*Daily Bread*) were both understood and practis'd, and that now, as in the Primitive Times the Sacrament of Christ's Death were daily celebrated; yet I think the Petition is best interpreted, of all manner of Food, that is necessary for the preservation of human Life, and of whatever is requir'd to support Man's frail Nature; which could not be particularly express'd in so short a Form.

But if you look not farther than to your Bodily needs, even to that of your Soul, the supply of the first may prove a Misery and not a Happiness, if the other be neglected. Now the first thing you are to beg for your Soul is the forgiveness of your Sins, and that God would not exact their penalty, but that for the sake of the satisfaction Christ made to his Divine Justice, he would mercifully acquit you from their Guilt and Punishment.

And to the end that you may not forfeit God's Pardon to you, by Denying yours to your Brethren, you are humbly to beseech the Almighty to give you those bowels of Compassion towards others, when they trespass against you; which you stand in need of when you trespass against them; and if you who, through the corruption of Humane Nature, are prone to revenge, can through God's Grace forgive others, you need not doubt but your Heavenly Father, whose Goodness is infinite, will forgive you; For it is certainly true: That if you forgive Men, you shall be forgiven of God.

Not

Not that you are to give Law to God, or to ground your Prayers on the merits of your own Works; but that you subscribe to God's order to Pardon, if you purpose to be Pardon'd. And here take notice, that (according to *Diodati*) the Forgiveness of Trespasses, for which you Pray, cannot be understood of the general remission of Sins, in respect of the everlasting Judgment; which has no other cause or ground before God, but Christ's satisfaction and intercession, but of the pardon of particular faults of Believers, in regard of punishments in this life. It was a rule of the Wise Men among the *Jews*, "That our pardoning of those who have injur'd us, is rewarded by God with hearing our Prayers for Forgiveness. And to this purpose are the words of *Siracides*, *Ecclus* 28. 1, 2, &c. "He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the hurt he hath done unto thee. so shall thy Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred a-

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“gainst another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy to a man which is like himself; and doth he ask forgiveness of his own Sins? If he that is but Flesh and Blood nourish hatred, who will entreat for pardon of his Sins?

But you are not to conclude from hence that Pardon from God depends only on your pardoning of others, or that it is merited by it, but that it is most reasonable, that you who request forgiveness of your Offences against God, should forgive the Offences of your Brethren; whose Offences are less in number and value, and not committed perhaps without your provocation. Take heed therefore lest by your Malice and want of Charity to others, you bring not God's wrath and indignation on your self.

Deliverance from the power of Sin, and all temptations to commit it, is the next thing respecting your Soul, that you are to seek for, at the hands of your Creator. Now, of your self you are unable to withstand those multitudes of temptations which daily assault you;

you ; so that you have need continually to have recourse to the Divine assistance, and to implore God either wholly to remove all temptations, or so to restrain their power and malice, that they do not overcome you. The former is not to be hop'd, and so not to be pray'd for. For the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, will never give over soliciting, alluring, and tempting you to Sin. Satan (as his name signifies) is to the Tempter, who being miserable by Sin, labours to make all like himself : And that he spares none, was seen in his hardness to set upon our Saviour ; whom he would have tempted to the most horrid iniquity, the worship of himself. And as this shews that none can escape his temptations, so it likewise shews that it is no Sin to be tempted, but that all the fault lies in yielding to the temptation : and this arises from (that great Impostor) your own Heart, which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

It ought then to be your earnest and incessant supplication to him, who can

restrain the powers of darkness, and infatuate the mischievous devices of Hell and all its Agents, that he would keep you from all evil circumstances, and dangerous occasions leading to Sin: that he would suppress in you all inclinations to evil, and not leave you to your self, nor to be tempted, and *carried away of your own lusts, and enticed*: That he would not unchain, and let loose, the infernal foes to assail and over-master you by their accursed seducements; but that *you may resist unto Blood, and be crown'd with conquest over them.*

But if your Heavenly Father for great purposes leads you into any signal trials and temptations, then do you resign your self to his absolute pleasure; humbly beseeching his *paternal tenderness*, to limit and controul the Tempter, and to restrain your consent. And tho' it ought to be your great grief to be at any time enticed to offend God, yet it cannot be any great discomfort, so long as God is pleas'd to relieve you from doing the evil to which you are tempted,

pted, and together with the temptation, to make you a way to escape.

The Jews have a Form, which they call the short Prayer, which is an Epitome or Abridgment of their longer Prayers; and it was a rule among them, "That he who had a promptness in Prayer, was to pray the eighteen Prayers, but he who wanted this promptness, was to use the short Prayer, which was a Recollection out of the other, and is as follows:

"**O**UR Father which art in Heaven, be
"gracious unto us. O Lord our God
"hallowed be thy Name, and let the remem-
"brance of thee be Glorified in Heaven a-
"bove, and upon earth here below. Let thy
"Kingdom reign over us now and for ever,
"Remit and forgive unto all whatsoever
"they have done against us. And lead us
"not into temptation, but deliver us from the
"evil thing. For thine is the Kingdom and
"thou shalt reign in Glory (or Power) for
"ever and ever, vid. Mr. John Gregory,
Pag. 168.

CHAP. XVI.

Prayer to be made in the plural number.

Amen.

AND both this Summary, and the larger Prayer, were used by the *Jews* in the daies of our Saviour: who out of them collected the Form, which he taught his Disciples, and which is now used by all Christians. But when our Lord gave this Prayer, he did not null or make void the other Prayers used by the *Jews*, nor did he intend that his Followers should use his Prayer and none other: but he gave it as an absolute, perfect Form by which our imperfect Prayers are to be regulated, and to be an abstract of all we are to Pray for. So that if any thing be wanting in our Prayers, it is to be supplied by adding unto them *the Lord's Prayer*. Which Christ (I say) gave not to extinguish but to regulate our Prayers; and to be added unto them, and to render them perfect

perfect and consummate. For it contains the heads of all things that you can either want or desire to have.

And our Lord in his Heavenly Wisdom so order'd the composure of his Prayer, that it might differ as little as possible from the *Jewish* Form, and that it might likewise be fit to be said by all. And I think there is none (of what Religion soever) who own God to be the Father, or Maker of Heaven and Earth, who may not pertinently make use of the Lords Prayer, and desire every thing that therein is set down.

It is observable, that the *Jews* appointed all their Prayers to be said in the Plural Number, tho' he that said them was alone by himself, and they did it for this reason, " That it might never seem as tho' a man were cut off from the congregation. And they have this commendable Canon, *viz.* " He that prays ought always when he prays, " to joyn with the Church. Which Canon they do not strictly understand only of Prayers said in the Synagogue, but wheresoever they are made in the world.

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And when a *Jew* is most alone he is to say Prayers in the *plural* and not in the *singular* number. In which number our Saviour also has taught us to pray. So that when you are in the greatest solitude and separation from company you are to own your union with the Church, and Communion with all true Believers, for whose happiness you ought to pray as well as for your own.

The *Jewish* Church Ordain'd that all their Publick Prayers should be concluded with (*Amen.*) I say Publick Prayers, for, in their Private or *Phylacterical* Prayers it was omitted. And it was a sign those Prayers were Publick to which *Amen* was added, and a sign they were otherwise when it was not used. And the *Christian* Church retains the same Custom, adding *Amen* to all her Prayers. Which is a word of that weight and moment, that it ought never to be omitted. For by saying *Amen* you declare your trust and assurance that God will grant the things you ask according to his Will. It being one special branch of your confidence in God ;
that

that if you ask any thing according to his Will, and not your own fancy, he heareth you. By saying *Amen* to the Publick Prayers you exprels your approbation of them, that you agree with the Congregation, and present but one common vote unto God. And when there is a happy harmony and consent of heart and voice in praying for things lawful and expedient, you may be assured that he who has promis'd to grant the Requests of two or three gather'd together in his Name, will much more incline his ear to a pious multitude, to a numerous Congregation, met solemnly to beg his Blessings.

But besides all this your humble, hearty, and zealous saying *Amen*, shews your attentiveness to the Publick Prayers, and that you are neither asleep nor inadvertent when they are made.

And indeed one way to quicken your attention, is to consider that you are to say an hearty *Amen* to every Prayer, and as it were to set your seal unto it by so doing. And by saying *Amen*, you also let the Hearer of Prayers know that
you

you hope and believe to have your share in the good things that are desir'd: and that on the contrary you do not expect any benefit by the Petitions which you do not sign and confirm by your *Amen*. In which single word all your own Wants are sum'd up, and theirs also for whom you pray. And we read that the Primitive Christians thought the saying an hearty *Amen* to be of so great importance, that they pronounc'd it with a sort of vociferation and affectionate earnestness; which is enough to shame and awaken their negligence, who either regard not at all to say *Amen*, or do it with so provoking a drowsiness and indifferency, as if it were all one to them whether God would grant or deny their Request; whether he did hearken to their Prayers, or stop his ears against them: which being consider'd, will (I hope) have the happy influence to make you so attentive to Prayer, as to close it with such a sensible *Amen*, as that the Lord God may say, so too; 1 Kings 1. 36.

CHAP. XVII.

Of our Lord's Doxology.

AND having now given you this plain familiar account of the Things you are to desire of God, as they are set down in the *Divine Summary* left us by our Lord; give me leave for (a conclusion) to present you with a short account of the drift and design, of the scope and end of Prayer; which is none other than God's Glory, and your own Benefit.

That God's Glory ought to be the first and principal end and drift of Prayer, is naturally to be concluded from the *Doxology*, wherewith both *Jews* and *Christians* have ever closed their Supplications. That *Doxology* was us'd by the *Hebrews* in *David's* time, is plain from his own practice; who praised the Lord before all the People, and said, "Blessed be thou, Lord God of *Israel* our Father, for ever and ever. Thine

"O

" O Lord, is the Greatness, and the
 " Power, and the Glory, and the Victo-
 " ry, and the Majesty, for all that is in
 " the Heaven and in the Earth, is
 " thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord,
 " and thou art exalted as Head above all.
 " Both Riches and Honour come from
 " thee, and thou Reignest over all, and
 " in thy Hand is Power and Might, and
 " in thine Hand it is to make Great, and
 " to give Strength unto all. Now there-
 " fore our God, we thank thee, and praise
 " thy glorious Name. *1 Chron. 29, 10, 11, &c.*

And we find a Doxology added to
 all the Publick Prayers of the *Jews*, which
 was follow'd by our Saviour in his Com-
 pendious Form. And tho' some both in
 the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, have look'd
 upon the Doxology at the end of the
 Lord's Prayer, " to be a Spurious Ad-
 " dition put in by some well-meaning
 " man, who did not well know what he
 " did; yet I see no ground for this
 " saying. For since it is granted by all,
 That our Saviour took every Petition
 of his Prayer out of the *Jewish Eucha-*
logues, it may justly be thought that he
 thence

thence also took the Doxology, and added it to his Prayer, as the Jews to theirs.

Now, the Doxology is not only a Form of Praise and Thanksgiving, fit and proper to be the closing up of all Devotions; in token that they are directed to God's Honor, but it also contains the fundamental grounds of making your Addresses unto God. For in saying, *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever*: You acknowledg all those excellencies to be in God, which are the true and chief motives of Prayer, and which give life and spirit to that Heavenly Duty, and to all the Graces therein to be exercis'd.

And first, your Faith is greatly supported in the expectation of the good things you pray for, when you maturely revolve that you beg them of him, who is the only universal, absolute, Independent Lord and Sovereign of the World. And that he is easily intreated of his Subjects, and takes pleasure in their Protection and Happiness. Only remember that at the same time you acknowledge God's Kingdom, you own your self to be his Subject, and that it

is your duty to obey his Laws, and to submit intirely to his Government, and not to countenance any one rebel Lust against him.

And when (Secondly) you ascribe Power unto God, you profess your belief of his All-sufficiency, and that you present your Petition to one, who is able and willing to grant it. For if he wanted either Will or Power to give what you beg, it were enough utterly to discourage your Application: But seeing that God has *the bowels of a Father, and the arm of a King, and a Sovereign* right to dispose of every thing as he pleases, he is in all respects fitly qualified to grant the request you make unto him. And although your own unworthiness might justly hinder you from receiving any favour at his hand, yet he will not withhold what you rightly sue for: That his free Grace may have that Glory from you which he hath from all to whom he has been formerly bountiful.

There is an excellent Honour arising unto God from his own *infinite perfections*, and the effects thereof; and he expects

pects it should be paid him by all his Creatures both in Heaven and Earth. And tho' all solemn Acts of Religion should aim at his honour, and be directed to it, as their genuine end; yet in a more eminent manner this honour is design'd him in Prayer. For were it otherwise, Our Lord would not have begun his Prayer with, *Hallowed be thy Name*, nor have concluded it with, *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory*. And if the glory of what you have, and are, be not ascrib'd to that Omnipotent Being from whom you receive them; *If you sacrifice unto your Net, and burn incense unto your Drag*; if you attribute any acquisition or endowment to your self, you rob God of his Honour (of which he is most tender) and can be truly said neither to Hallow Gods Name, nor to give him Glory.

And here it will be natural for you to consider that the Kingdom, Power, and Glory of God, are not fading and transitory, but permanent, eternal, and for ever and ever. For if it were otherwise, and that you were to make your Prayers to a mortal, mutable God, one

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subject

subject to change of mind and death, it would lessen the vigor of your Devotion. But seeing the object thereof is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever: and that his Kingdom, Power, and Glory, are from everlasting to everlasting; seeing God is a merciful Father and still ready to hear the cry of his Penitent Children; and seeing he is for ever a King, loving and helpful to his Subjects; and for ever one, for whose Glory it is to grant your Addresses; these considerations give you spirit to call upon him with comfort and assurance, and prevent your doubting of his gracious Audience for the things you crave of him for the sake of his Kingdom, Power and Glory.

All communications of Goodness flow from God, and it is but just that they should return to him again in Sacrifices of Praise and Adoration. And therefore let it be your care to ascribe unto him the honour of all you have, and do. For this will keep you from that ostentation and vain-glory, to which man's proud nature is not a little inclinable, especially in matters of Religion, which
being

being observ'd by our Saviour, he strictly caution'd all men against it, bidding them by all means to avoid Vanity and Pride in the duties of Religion; and particularly in Alms, and Prayers. In Alms he requires such a Secrecy, as that if the left hand had eyes and ears, yet it should neither see nor hear what the right hand did, that by this means the Alms-giver might utterly be freed from all suspicion of Vain-glory.

The Scribes indeed gave their Alms with sound of trumpet, they call'd the Poor together from every quarter, not that they should all partake of their Alms, but to have the more Spectators. All they aim'd at was the empty rumour and vogue of being Bountiful. For which they were so far from deserving any reward from God, that they deserv'd a punishment, for their Folly, Dissimulation; and Injustice. For their Folly, in preferring Humane things to Divine; for their Dissimulation, in imposing upon the world, by their counterfeit Piety; and for their Injustice, in assuming that Praise to themselves which was due only unto God.

CHAP. XVIII.

The End and Drift of Prayer, &c.

AND as our Lord caution'd all men against Vain-glory in giving Alms, so he likewise caution'd them against the same in Prayer. In which he would have all carefully to eschew the fashion and mode of Hypocrites, Personators and Actors in Religion, who (among the *Jews*) were wont to pray standing in the Synagogues, and corners of the streets, places of publick concourse, where they were sure to have many to see them. But, instead of affecting any such popularity, he would have you studiously to avoid it, by going in your closet, and shutting the doors, and with all possible privacy to pray to your Father which is in secret, and your Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly. Not that our Lord condemns Publick Prayer, which the Church has practis'd ever since she had a being upon Earth, but rather than that you should be thought to pray for Ostentation,

Ostentation, he would have you retire from all worldly company, as *Jacob* did when he wrestled with the Angel, *Gen.* 32. 24. And in your private Prayers (of which Christ Jesus speaks *S. Matth.* 6.) to be as private as you can; to go into the most secret Apartment, and there unbosom your self to God. For tho' he himself be invisible, yet he sees you, how secret soever you are, and all that you do in secret. And he that is thus the beholder of Private Devotions shall reward you before men and Angels. Be content therefore that God looks upon and esteems you, that he is a witness of what you do, seeing it is from him alone that you expect your reward. But if in a duty wherein God's Glory is so nearly concern'd, you take in so poor an accession as the praise of men, it is but just that that should be your reward, and that you receive none other from God; to whom nothing can be more displeasing than to see Ostentation interpose in your Devotion, and that therein you seek the applause of men more than his Glory. Whereas in all your worship of God, private or publick, your
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eye should be still on his Honour, regarding nothing so much as to have him approve your doings, because he only is able to reward them.

And tho God's Glory isto be the first and principal end of your Prayers, yet in subordination to this, you may also design your own benefit, and that of others. For these are very consistent and need not be separate. For at the same time that you use Prayer as an Act of Worship solely due unto God, you may also use it as a means appointed by him to obtain his Blessings; which are either Spiritual or Secular, belonging to your Soul, or Body. The first are Grace, Holiness, and Pardon of Sins; in praying for which you may be peremptory and absolute. But in praying for temporal Blessings, you are to be conditional, and to use resignation and submission, and in craving them never to design any thing that is mean and fordid.

And (1.) if you desire, and God gives you, Secular Power and Authority, do not abuse or prostitute it to wicked, unmanly purposes, such as the gratifying of your spleen, and revenge, and the oppression of those

those you hate. But imploy your Authority in undoing the heavy burthens ; in protecting the impotent, and him that has no helper : in breaking the jaws of the wicked, and plucking the Spoil out of their teeth ; in delivering the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that has none to help : In short, use the authority God gives you, in executing Justice, and maintaining Truth, in being a Terror to evil doers, and a Praise and encouragement to them that do well.

And for worldly Riches, do not desire them for such low regards as the maintaining of Pride, Pomp, Luxury, or the like ; but that you may have wherewith to maintain good Works, and to be in your prosperity (what Job was in his) *Eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. That the blessing of him who is ready to perish may come upon you, and that by your means the heart of the needy may sing for joy, Job. 29.*

(2.) Let your Prayers and Endeavours go hand in hand ; for the former without the latter is trifling and mockery ; and the latter without the former, vanity and presumption : you can never rightly desire what you do not by all good means labour to obtain. To pray for that which

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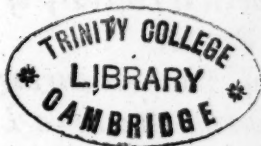
you do not endeavour after, is to be the moral of the Clown in the Apologue, who call'd to *Hercules* to help him out with his mit'd Cart, without setting his own shoulder to the wheel; The eye to Heaven, and the hand to the Helm, is the old rule; Supplications and Endeavours are never to be disjoyn'd, no good is to be expected from either of them when alone.

(3.) Observe what answer God makes, and what returns you receive to your Prayers: And in particular consider that his gracious Providence may often deny you some temporal Blessings as seeing them less fit for you to receive. But then he gives you others in their stead, which his infinite Goodness and Wisdom sees are more for your advantage. And tho' God has promis'd to give to them that ask, yet it is with these limitations, *viz.* That he sees it good for you: and that he has not by some particular Decree determin'd the contrary. As for example, If God has determin'd to destroy an impenitent Nation, it is not all the Prayers of the holiest men on Earth, can prevail with God to preserve it. And of this you have a dreadful instance in *Ezekiel* 14. where it
is

is evident that when God has resolv'd to punish a Land with any kind of Scourge, he will not forbear to do it for any manner of intercession.

Finally, whether God grants or denies your requests, it is your duty to resign your will to his, and to affect your mind with a profound sense of his infinit goodness, in that, without difficulty of Access, he admits you to pray unto him, and that you need not doubt of acceptance, if you pray as you ought. And to shew how you are to do this, has been my care in what I now present you. God prosper what has been said, and make it to be for his own Glory, and your eternal Happiness, through Jesus Christ. To whom with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost, be Praise, Glory, Adoration, and Thanksgiving, for ever and for evermore, *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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